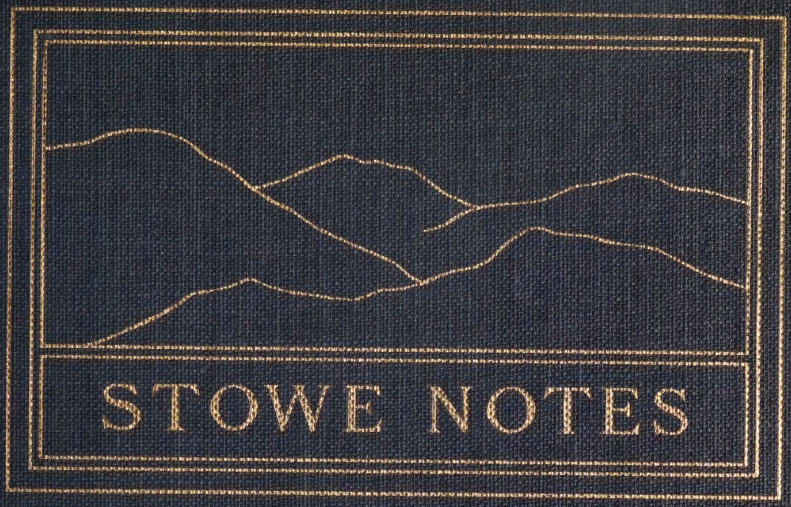
STOWE NOTES



STOWE NOTES

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STOWE NOTES
LETTERS AND VERSES

Edward Martin Taber at Stowe

STOWE NOTES
LETTERS AND VERSES

BY

EDWARD MARTIN TABER

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
1913

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THE ROLLING EARTH

OUTDOOR SCENES AND THOUGHTS
FROM THE WRITINGS
OF

WALT WHITMAN

COMPILED BY

WALDO R. BROWNE

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN BURROUGHS

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THE ROLLING EARTH

This book, which is dedicated by the editor, Mr. Waldo R. Browne, "to all who are enamored of growing out-doors," has been skillfully compiled, both from the poetry of Walt Whitman, and from his rich and characteristic note-books. As Mr. John Burroughs points out in his admirable Introduction, no other poet's imagination has so "reveled" in thoughts of the whole scheme of things as Walt Whitman's. His writing of Nature, whether in poetry or prose, is always marked by vividness and actuality: in verse by a lyrical passion, and in prose by a luxuriance of observation, that are unique. This collection of out-of-door passages from his writings will appeal strongly, not only to all admirers of his poetry, but to all lovers of the open. It is an ideal book for the pocket on a country walk, and an equally ideal gift for the Nature lover.

It is published in convenient and attractive form, in a semi-flexible cloth binding, suitable both for the pocket and for the library table. There is a photogravure frontispiece from a rare and interesting portrait of Whitman.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE author of these Notes, Edward Martin Taber, was born on Staten Island, July 21, 1863. As a youth he showed his gift for painting, but on account of ill health studied only a few months, with Abbott Thayer. In 1887, after a journey to Europe and short trips to the South and to the Adirondacks for his health, he was exiled from New York, as his only chance for life, and chose Stowe, Vermont, as his home, where, with the exception of one or two brief intervals, he lived to within a few months of his death. He died on September 9, 1896, at Washington, Connecticut.

His frail health made continuous work impossible, but in the almost arctic winters of northern Vermont he finished a number of paintings. These and many sketches in oil and pencil, together with his Notes and literary fragments, constitute his life's work; but those who knew his singularly just and discriminating spirit realize that this visible accomplishment is but part of what he achieved; for in the solitude of his life, under the suffering that was his portion, striving with undeviating devotion to truth for his ideal, he developed a character that is an undying possession to those who knew him.

In one of his note-books I find these words: "We built a fire in the parlor; it shone cheerily; it became the

centre and gathering-point of the house. The building that had before been a shelter, a soulless tenement, became a home, in virtue of that sacred flame." So it was with him; he was the centre of his little circle, his was its vivifying spirit. Carlyle has said that "there is no life of a man, faithfully recorded, but is a heroic poem of its kind, rhymed or unrhymed." With the hope that some glimpses of this short life, lived under such severe and disheartening restrictions, may give to others a part of the inspiration it gave to his friends, I have added to the Stowe Notes and Verses some few personal records and letters, fragmentary as they necessarily are, and elusive as the gentle nature they reflect must remain.

His delicate perception and sensitiveness to all aspects of beauty show especially in his pencil sketches, "executed with a conscientiousness almost reverential, as though the intricate wonder of construction and the fragrant daintiness of rose and carnation were sacred in his imagination," but everything he touched bears witness to his love for Nature; humbly, reverently he transcribed her—his beloved North Countrie, his adopted home. George de Forest Brush writes of these oil paintings: " 'Pictures,' says Emerson, 'should not be picturesque. I demand that they domesticate me.' This is the feeling I have when I look on these canvases—these pines casting their blue shadows on the snow, the sparkling birches and clear-cut mountain lines, seem to bring me home to the days when our vision was unaffected by art, knowledge, and foreign travel, when the landscape seen from our father's house in the clear December air filled us with a sensation akin to human

affection. More than this, the faithfulness with which these details are wrought is the outcome of the artist's love for the facts, and the impression of beauty that they give is enduring . . . they are the old rare kind wrought in faithfulness and affection." And Abbott Thayer adds: "Taber seems to me to have given himself to Nature more trustfully than almost any other man. His best landscapes thrill one with their look of having been transported pure to the canvas from the beautiful austere scene before him. His exquisite power of sight brought him so close to those wild valleys that no tradition had come between him and their beauty, and it ran through him on to the canvas, changed only in that look of being recognized." But his keen perception looked through and beyond the exquisite revelations of the Universe he saw, into the soul of the Beauty he worshipped; and out of that deeper vision, all unconsciously, he wrought his own character.

F. T. H.

INTRODUCTION

THESE fragments will take their place in the world's precious store of great men's journals, of all literature perhaps the most thrilling.

Between these thin leaves await us the cool shades, not only of the forests Taber loved, but of his own brave and peaceful heart. His austerely beautiful portraits of the scenery in which he passed the last years of his life, and the following most precious records of what was passing in his soul during the same period, both of these, however fragmentary, achieved under the heavy burden of illness, show faculties of the first order. His exquisite perceptions come to us as clear of his earthly vicissitudes as violets or crystals out of the sod.

Emerson's closing words upon Thoreau's death insist upon associating themselves with Taber:

"The country knows not yet, or in the least part, how great a son it has lost. It seems an injury that he should leave in the midst of his broken task, which none else can finish—a kind of indignity to so noble a soul, that it should depart out of Nature before he has been really shown to his peers for what he is. But he, at least, is content. His soul was made for the noblest society; he had in a short life exhausted the capabilities of this world; wherever there is knowledge, wherever there is virtue, wherever there is beauty, he will find a home."

ABBOTT H. THAYER

STOWE NOTES

1890–1893

Mount Mansfield

JANUARY

Even in the calmest summer day, or moonlight night, or still autumn afternoon, I have never, it seems to me, seen the landscape more tranquil. The hues are soft and harmonious; all that was crude and harsh in color has been gradually eliminated. The raw tints of green in the winter fields have changed to a glowing, subdued orange.

The woods no longer form a contrast, but blend quietly into the scene. The Mountain,* under a pale film-spread sky, rising a ponderous slaty-blue mass above the warm-tinted valley, gives a fine effect of altitude. The snow that remains in the rocky crevices, now that it is melted in the valley below, suggests alpine heights. This effect is enhanced by what little snow remains clinging among the woods on the side; it is formed into perpendicular whitish streaks, and conveys an impression of successive and precipitous cliffs.

A column of blue smoke rises on Luce's Hill, and mounts up, swayed but not dispersed by the almost imperceptible breeze from the northwest.

Though the grasses bend, they give no sound. There is absolute stillness, except for the distant rumble of wagons on the iron-rutted road.

Coming home through the pasture, I notice the brook

* "The Mountain" always means Mansfield.

has a broken icy border, opaque and frosty, except at the inner edge washed by the running water, where it sparkles like tinsel.

Walk in the afternoon. A strong south wind (which they say is more potent to melt snow than the sun); a moist feeling in the air, like an approaching summer rain.

Rain began to fall heavily at about four p.m.

I think I never saw moonlight so brilliant as that to-night: it is subdued day.

This morning and almost all day a fine snow has been falling, beautiful crystals, floating down sometimes singly, sometimes two or three together.

Late in the afternoon a warm golden light over the bare woods and yellow fields of Sterling.

To-day out walking in the rocky west pasture. I wear sheepskin boots with thick leather soles—very agreeable to walk in—like moccasins. Particularly I enjoy treading on the mossy rocks, where the crisp soft lichens form a delightful carpet. Their colors come out well to-day, in this even, subdued light. Pale green, lilac, dark green, bronze-tinted, and orange.

The conical tufts of the sumach are a conspicuous red—a glowing maroon—a rusty crimson. These are the stag-horn sumach with the black downy branches.

The night of the eighth was windy and excessively cold. From my window, looking up the slope of the hill,

I see the wind lifting the fine snow like smoke, and blowing it across the meadows. In the shadowed and struggling moonlight it rises in waves, and sweeps like a procession of phantoms along the windy ridge. The little house, the orchard, and the pine near the crest are enveloped and almost lost in the white gust. The solid features of the scene appear like rocks smothered in spray. There is a misty sparkle of the flying snow along the ridge-pole of the barn.

The wind is lamentably loud.

It was zero at eight o'clock, six degrees at two p.m., zero at four p.m. All day long there was a kind of white mist on the horizon, somewhat like a hot summer haze.

To-day it is snowing—a soft fall of innumerable and visibly beautiful crystals, forming a coating as light and soft as down.

Wind in the northwest or north. At eight o'clock two degrees, at twelve o'clock five degrees.

Snowing.

This morning a flock of snow buntings in the garden, running about in the loose snow with the toddling motion of pigeons. Not so white as I expected to see them; the males black and white, more distinctly marked than females, but with brownish tinge on top of head. As they took flight, it was with a chattering outcry, a loud twittering.

Later several chickadees, on swift wings, darting among the bare trees, and lisping their cheery note.

The thermometer is at about twenty-four degrees (noon); the air is soft; the snow falls in minute flakes,

but though light, is not very dry. There is a faint wind from the southwest, not enough to stir the pine or shake down the accumulating snow; but it gives direction to the falling flakes, moving them northeasterly.

The inscrutable silence, the mystery of winter! Through the muffled air comes the scream of blue jays. The white fields and cloudy woods fade into the sky. I notice the exquisite detail of lichens on the boughs of the apple trees, gray and gold, sometimes orange or red-gold. It is amusing to brush the snow from the fences and beneath it find on the weather-beaten boards the persistent green of these humble plants. They are arranged with a decorative charm of position and color. Blue-gray lichens will be relieved by a touch of pea-green or olive, or occasionally the gray and gold tints that are conspicuous on the apple trees. There is something amusingly artificial about these crisp green disks.

This morning I noticed some redpolls flying near the house. They utter a sweet note, a long-drawn "twee"—several in succession, as a canary often does in introductory fashion before breaking into song. It seems to say, "Listen, listen, listen!" With the caged bird it is a touching prelude, infinitely pathetic; but there is something sweet and cheery in the note uttered in freedom. This reminds me that in all bird notes, even the most melancholy, as the wood pewee's and some phases of the hermit thrush's song, there is nevertheless a cheerful intimation. It is a tone that belongs to their free condition. The pewee seems to say, "I am sad—but oh, what sweet sadness!"

I saw a flock of birds fly across the garden—one lit on a bean-pole, with a cry very harsh and peculiar. They all took flight with a chattering like the snow buntings. I could not see them well, as they flew against the sun, but I think they were a flock of these birds.

It has been snowing intermittently all day; this morning it was about thirty degrees; much slush.

The wind at ten a.m. was blowing from the south, at noon from the east, at three p.m. from the southwest, bringing a heavy snow-storm—large whirling flakes that came dancing against the western windows, white against the earth, dusky spots out of the sky.

I walked in the west pasture. I found the brook running half-hidden under snow-coated rotten ice. I amused myself by breaking this crust and forming a miniature ice-dam. The harsh gurgle of the cascade was silenced; the water, with abated voice, seemed conspiring to seek some lower and secret exit.

The pasture presents a more even surface, now the snow is drifted into the hollows.

I notice the stems of raspberry conspicuous upon the snow.

I sat down to rest under the white pine; at a rod or two distant, as I drew toward it, I was aware of its singing. It is said our civilization has not improved on the wildness of the Indian in respect of the musical quality in language. The Iroquois tongue is more rudimentary than the English, perhaps on that account more musical; but the famed music of the Onondaga I feel sure is surpassed by the aboriginal conifer language—which is the earliest voice of Nature.

The pine speaks, solus; the little spruces that stand darkly at his feet seem to listen. From time to time they move their branches, and a faint sigh passes among them. Even of the snowflakes whirling by, it seems as if they lingered in the air, and their natural silence was self-imposed.

If any human being were gifted with such tones, so varied, so passionate, so deep, so gentle, he could move men as a river carries a leaf. An actor with such power!

The white pine is a king in eloquence, a wizard in ventriloquism. Sometimes his voice is loud, surging in my ears; it lessens, it fades, it seems to speak from indefinable distance.

There is a fine sibilant tone in the louder and higher notes, and yet there is a depth to them that the adjective fails to touch. I have never attached much meaning to the phrase "the soughing as of the wind," but it seems adequately to describe this sound.

The pine falls to silence, and then a low and distant moan, the rumble of the wind in the encircling woods, is audible. The wind soughs in the tree, grows loud, and dies; it reminds me of a great orchestra, when on the inarticulate grumbling of the basses swells the eerie plaint of violins.

The snow packs so readily that I can walk without much difficulty up and down the sides of boulders, where formerly I could hardly find footing.

It was amusing to scale such an eminence and see below me the winding course of my footprints. Going down I could not tell how steep had been the inclines I traversed, on account of the even, white surface pre-

sented to my eye. It was only when I reached the bottom, looking back at my footprints, that I could form any idea. Finally with little difficulty, and slipping but slightly, I descended the perpendicular face of a boulder about twenty feet high.

The long tassels of the pine do not hold the snow so naturally or in such quantity as the stiff spruce leaves. Of these, some diminutive trees two to three feet high have the appearance of monstrous crystals, absolutely white from my three feet vantage, except that along the edge of each twig there is the needle-etched outline.

The wind shifted toward the north at about five o'clock, making the entire circuit of the compass, with the exception of the northeast quarter, within twelve hours.

It is clear and very cold, about four degrees, but there is no wind. I tried my mare with sleigh-bells in the morning. The jingling seemed greatly to exhilarate her.

Beyond the village, on the Mountain road, I meet numerous lumber sledges carrying large spruce logs chained together—the aboriginal giant brought captive from his native mountains. It is the first opportunity the lumbermen have had to transport unsawed timber.

The sky is soft like a summer sky: there is none of the cold sparkle of winter in it; the clouds toward the north are faintly pink-tinged.

The Mountain during the morning was very white, but at sunset, the light being behind it, it lost much of

its hoary aspect; and the Hogback, on the east, became a ridge of glistening silver.

A clear cold-hued sunset, against which Camel's Hump stood in isolated beauty. Its altitude is imposing; it lifts itself skyward with a grand and powerful motion; it shares with Mansfield the glory of the landscape; the southern hills do it homage. How happy the country that can claim two such noble mountains; how happy the eye that includes them in a single glance!

Returning home this afternoon, over the crest of the hill eastward, I noticed the northern mountains, the undulating line behind Eden, flushed by the sunset, the shadows purple, the snowy ridge pink and losing its outline in the sky. These hills seemed actual clouds, resting on the horizon.

I broke an icicle twenty-nine inches long off the rear veranda. I set it upright on the stone fence opposite the house; the sunset tinged it golden. It shone a clear cold gleam against the dull snow.

This morning there is a beautiful crystallization on the boughs of trees, fences, etc., a white bloom, an infinity of minute plumy crystals. The stone fence, the surface of the snow, everything, seems to bear this wintry foliage. Last evening was mild, possibly below freezing, and the sudden fall of the temperature (twenty-two degrees at ten a.m.) may have occasioned this.

There are fitful gleams of sunlight and shadows trailing westward over the snow. The base of the Mountain is lost in a purple haze, but the profile shines palely, elevated high above the cloudy horizon. Its aspect is awfully impressive.

It is a mosaic sky.

The jays have a comic aspect—a kind of goblin look, with their pointed caps and long noses.

In the afternoon, drove around by Gold Brook. We descended into a sheltered and woody spot on the north side of the hill. It was a fall out of the familiar world into the phenomena of Fairyland. Every twig was white with snow, every stalk and weed stood a branching crystal. It was like a plunge under the ocean into the forests of coral. So strange it was, and so beautiful! Or might it not have been a glimpse at a scene earlier than the carboniferous period presented—a fantastic variation of crystalline forms?

The brook at this point makes a bend toward the road, and the eye, following the curve, sees the dark stream, clogged with green ice and snow-bordered, disappear behind a boulder hoary with snow and icicles.

Coming home about half an hour before sunset, I noticed a magenta flush along the summit of a snowy mound.

The morning was cloudy, but at eleven o'clock the clouds broke in the northwest, and sunshine followed. A slight southwesterly wind in the afternoon.

Walking in the west pasture, and resting under the white pine.

When I last walked here, in a snow-storm, I was struck by the beauty of the snow-powdered foliage of the spruces; the more heavily coated, the more beautiful it appeared to me. I remember shaking the snow

from a bough, to contrast it with its snowy neighbors, and giving my verdict in favor of the latter. To-day, forgetful of yesterday's conclusions, I found myself remarking particularly the beauty and vividness of these evergreens, now disencumbered of snow.

Nature has no degrees of beauty; in the supposition of the contrary we are governed by our own degrees of appreciation. Nature in all her aspects is complete beauty. This is trite, but in making the statement it is common to attribute to Nature an unsympathetic inevitableness. This is, I think, no less partial. Nature is debonair. She has comfort for whoever can disembarrass himself of egotism sufficiently to accept it. Hers is an undistinguishing charity. She does not stand aloof waiting the approach of the deserving; but how generally and in how many sweet and subtle ways she offers consolation!

The velvety red cones of the sumach are beautiful against the exquisite blue of the sky, and lower the green of the spruces. They have a military suggestion—the red cockade.

Especially do I delight in looking northward on the shining winter landscape.

The Pilgrims,* beyond a cloudy patch of red maple saplings, rise to a seemingly great height. They are motionless; they seem, in common with all the features of the scene, to be attentive to the prompting of a controlling and sublime presence—to look for inspiration to the Mountain, the crowning and presiding glory of the landscape. That portion hidden by interposing ridges

*A group of maples on a hill.

from a direct communication seems, in its serenity, to be conscious of this majestic vicinity.

While I stood quite motionless looking at the landscape, I heard the lisp and the "day-day-day" of a titmouse rapidly approaching. The neat little buff-breasted fellow swept so close to me that I could hear the sharp sibilant whir of his wings.

His excess of good spirits seemed to make him restless. He lit for an instant on a sumach near at hand, and again in passing made an inclination toward me, as if he were half disposed to investigate a new quality of stump.

I watched his skipping flight for some little time, and long after he had disappeared I could hear his elastic chip and his hoarse little "day-day-day."

Although he is less strictly a winter bird than the redpolls, he seems more at home. I never see him hunting the stable-yard, the house, and the garden, as is their custom; he gets his living quite independent of the farmer, flitting about the pastures and hugging the windy side of the woods.

The agitated twittering of the redpolls, and the huddled flocks in which they invariably move, suggest a want of confidence, whereas he speaks in the cheeriest accents, and flies alone and undaunted.

We collected some pine cones, and used them to perfume the sitting-room, placing them on the top of the stove. Some we burned in the stove, which is an open one. The scales glowed like red-hot copper; sometimes they were tipped with a fiery rim. Without diminution or loss of form, they turned from copper to silver, and finally collapsed, a filmy ash.

In the afternoon the wind dropped. As in the previous very cold and windy day, I notice a haze on the horizon. At about four o'clock this became southward a golden mist.

I went out just before sunset to a rocky knoll north of the farm, in order to have an unbroken view of the sky.

Beyond the ragged tops of the sugar-wood (north) lay rosy clouds. The hills were of a delicate rose-purple, Mount Mansfield a mass of vapors; a heavy cloud like a snow-drift overlaid and smothered the Mountain from crown to base. This was opal-tinted.

The outlines of the mountains south and southwestward were softened and blurred by this singular rosy haze; the hills were as soft as when they bore their summer foliage. Camel's Hump, like the Mountain, is hidden in a purple cloud.

What earthly spectacle can rival in solemnity and mystery mountains thus cloud-obscured? The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, descending upon the elect. Dove-hued, white, and opalescent, the clouds settle on the mountains, that, separated from the earth by this interposition of vapors, are caught up into a celestial atmosphere.

Later, on the embers of this sunset, the crescent moon appears, a cold scimitar.

A bleak day, but windless. The sky a uniform gray cloud.

A jay, shooting between an apple tree and the cornbin, establishes a color relation with the distant slaty-blue hills.

Yesterday, coming up from the swamp, out of a gloomy hollow, to the slope of the pasture, over which was the pale green evening sky and light rose-tinted clouds, I saw a small flock of snow buntings, some dozen or so. They flew low, sweeping up from the meadows on the opposite slope, and as they passed, almost over my head, I noticed how white they were beneath, and felt (as I always do when I see them) that they must be some kin to sea birds. Certainly they fly on the edge of the storm, breasting the inanimate waves of the snow-drifts as the sea gull and the stormy petrel breast the face of the sea. I heard their twittering—I cannot find a word to describe the note—but it came to me like a faint ripple of sound in the intense and cold silence. It spoke to me more movingly than any articulate utterance I know. My heart swelled—with my eyes I followed them until they were lost in the distance—I was almost breathless with emotion, with delight.

Night sounds:

Of the winds, there is much variety in tone and character.

The most frequent here, the west wind, is a wild spirit. All the wind voices that thrill and startle are his—wailing cries in despairing accents, sounds of hooting and moaning, and shriller screams and whistlings. His attacks are fierce, and persistent too. When at night I hear a loud rumbling under the eaves, and the trees beginning to roar, I know there'll be no cessation until either the clouds, that must be heavy on the mountains, are broken and scattered, or the wind changes its direction.

If from the north, it comes with a cold and steady flow, almost voiceless, slipping through the bare branches without a perceptible sound, perhaps moaning softly at the corners of the house, but always in the pine that stands in the dooryard, arousing a voice that sighs and murmurs with ceaseless sweetness, rising to a thin and airy whisper, and again gathering power, until it sinks to a deep sonorous soughing—a monody infinitely sad and soothing.

The south wind is at once blustering and stealthy. His onset is almost as terrific as the wild west wind, but when you wait for the full force of the gale this outburst presages, there comes a sudden lull, a moment of silence almost, when some airy voice in the distance, scarcely audible, dies on the ear, and there comes some light and startling sound, as of the lift of the slats in the shutter, or as if deft and invisible fingers tried the fastenings of the window. These bursts of the south wind through a leafless orchard, will pass like the roll of muffled drums.

Yesterday was like a March day—windy, and yet not very cold. Lakes of blue sky, and dark veils of mist shrouding the mountains, and snowflakes floating in the air.

The afternoon I spent in the south wood, where Henry and Arthur were cutting up the fallen timber. I don't know of any manual work that I think I should enjoy so much as wood-chopping. It is a most interesting thing to see a tree dismembered, the smaller limbs and twigs lopped off, the boughs cut into fagots, the trunk sawed into lengths.

The axe is in itself the most inviting weapon, an exceeding handy tool. The environment is so charming, and there are pleasures connected with it that result from the work itself, as of the echo that wakes the wood on every stroke of the axe, a sound that satisfies the ear, neither too harsh nor too loud, but full of a certain primitive music, ringing, conclusive. I stood for over an hour watching the process of the work, over knees in wet snow.

We came out at about half past five; there was a break in the clouds southwest, and irregular lines of flame-color behind the tree-tops.

The day before was unusual in its character. It was mild—at noon the thermometer registered something like thirty-six degrees. There was a pleasant wind, and although the sky was overcast, the light shone through it as through water, with a suggestion of intercepted but not remote sunshine. The wind was more southerly than southwesterly, and, notwithstanding the rise of temperature, had nothing of the spring quality that is common during a thaw. It was rather like the air of an early autumn day, cool, pleasant, soft, but not enervating, with a quality in it that is the secret of those strange sensations of revival, of longing, that come sometimes in the fall of the year, but always with the spring. That sense of mental and moral release that the April thaws bring—there is something in it more than the revival of life, the loosing of the waters, the relaxation of Winter's stricture. It is a quality in the *air,* in its freshness and temperance, that whispers of wider horizons, that leads the thoughts beyond the range of the

eye, to the unseen valleys, mountains, and forests over which it blows; more than a local wind controlled by the geographical conditions of some particular state or country, it seems to come over half the round of the earth.

What is it that suggests and governs the migrations of birds? Ornithologists explain it by the hypothesis that birds return in summer to their original home, which they have learned to desert in winter-time in pursuit of a warmer and more propitious climate. However it be, I'm sure it's this subtle invitation in the spring and autumnal winds that tempts them and keeps alive the migratory impulse that suggests the half-forgotten images of other lands. The thrush, now in the warmth of the West Indies, will remember the cool silence of these damp northern woods; the robin, in the Gulf States, be reminded of his New England farm.

So in autumn, when they gather for flight, it will be interesting to fancy what sweet and sudden revival of memory charms them southward.

Spring and early fall, those are times to travel in.

To-day is cloudy before noon, with a very delicate light dust of snow on the boughs, giving the wood, especially where an evergreen shows on the edge, a most interesting aspect.

There is the freshness and stillness of early summer morning in the air.

At noon the clouds break, detaching into mackerel shoals, and the turquoise blue of the sky appears.

They are taking ice out of the pond, and the clear,

green-blue, peacock-blue cakes, shot and veined with light, present a sight as rich and satisfying as if they were indeed of the so-called precious minerals.

To-day in the wood, that characteristic sound of cold, the cracking of the trees, like the pop of an air-gun, in more subdued quality, and sharper, like a small revolver report; sometimes even a heavier, more impressive sound.

After an hour's hard work, succeeded in bringing down the large basswood; it fell with much splintering, and threw a dense cloud from the soft snow into which it plunged.

A lovely effect of light, looking eastward (there was a very fine drifting of little snow-crystals, and an overcast sky, no bright sunlight), a most soft, dove-colored world; the snow on the boughs the lightest of all the tones, and that a subdued yellowish white, against a purple-blue sky, mauve clouds, and the richer and deeper purple of the distant hillside.

FEBRUARY

Two nights of last week were interesting, the moon then growing to the full: first, windy, and clear moonlight; second, the breaking away of clouds that, pushed eastward by the rising west wind, trailed swift shadows across the white country. The air was fresh and cold, like the breath of young Winter—a December or late November wind, icy and vitalizing. The collies ranged the farm, clamorous against the moon, galloping with the flying shadows, or, distinctly seen, black wolfish forms in the moonlight.

Last night the wind was more southerly, less boisterous, but full of many blended sounds. The moon (nearly full) was hidden, but the clouds were not very dense, and a pale and uniform light, aided by the reflection from the snow, pervaded the scene.

Whenever the wind shook the little cherry trees below my window, there was a high-pitched rushing sound, with a kind of ghastly brightness, like a thin gush of water, and with this, at times, the soughing of the pine mingled distinctly. In the pauses, the sugar-wood roared like the distant sea, and when this sound fell, the vox humana of the storm, the eerie plaintive murmur, unlocalized, unaccountable, seeming to come from indefinable distance, a whisper in the horizon, crept in among the subsiding sounds. Laying my ear close to the win-

A February Afternoon (Hogback in Distance)

dow was as if to the mouth of a shell. The night was hollow, reverberant. There was no wailing and hooting in the wind—a more mysterious agency seemed at work. The slats of my shutter were rattled and fingered; there were sudden gusts and quick subsidence—the wind seemed to be feeling its way; it was a reconnaissance, a scouting, on the advance of the storm.

Mr. Cobb says that sometimes, cutting trees, he has come across a deermouse's nest in some hollow trunk, where he found stored as much as a quart of beech nuts, or even more.

This morning, which is windless, clear, and cold (eighteen degrees), has a freshness like an early June morning.

Camel's Hump and the Mountain are white-capped, and below, a third of the slope, is a frosty band, sharply defined, where the clouds rested yesterday. Out driving, I noticed the extraordinary blueness of mountain-sides seen through pine branches, now somewhat dull in color—yellowish.

I remarked several days ago that the hemlocks and spruces in the pastures were faded, and I fancied the pines retained their color much better. This is the case of the pine in the dooryard, whose tassels are a vivid and, in some lights, bluish green.

Last night the rush of the wind, the tinkle of rain, reminded me of summer.

Getting up in the darkness, I saw a salmon-colored

square on the near corner of the barn, and knew it to be early morning, and this indication a lantern gone with the hired man to the milking. Later I saw its rays swing and tremble on my ceiling, and heard the house door closed.

At half past nine, thermometer forty-five degrees, wind getting to the west, signs of clearing—a complete thaw. I notice in the house little gnats, some with straight antennæ; some, I think, plumed—these smaller.

Overcast and excessively windy during the morning. At about three p.m. went out walking. The thaw had melted the snow, and left more than half the surface of the fields and pastures bare. It lies in hollows, and on the north sides of little slopes, rocks, or eminences of any sort. The ice, over the surface of which flows a thin stream of water, is rotten.

There is a sense of relief, of revival, in this relaxing of Winter's grasp, this reappearance of the earth out of her shroud. A pleasant perfume is in the air. A positive pleasure is the pressure of the foot upon the soft saturated mould, grass, and mosses. Something in the air and the sunshine of summer.

Among the spruces in the west pasture: on the north side of a group of these I see the sunlight, admitted through the interposing foliage, fall in spots upon the this-way-spreading branches, vivifying the rich green. How precious now is every hint of this loveliest color!

Mounting the slope of a long boulder, over its top, in the hollow on the further side I saw a salmon-colored bird that, observing me, took refuge in the thick boughs

of a spruce near at hand. Standing perfectly still, I was presently aware of another fluttering out from the same tree, this an olive-gray, somewhat tinged with yellow. At first I took them for a pair of pine grosbeaks, but they seemed too small. On further investigation, I inclined to believe them crossbills.

I must have spent three quarters of an hour in watching this pretty couple. They having gone to the opposite side of the tree, I made a cautious and silent detour, and was rewarded by a sight of the male, on the bough of a hemlock, pecking at a spruce cone which he held with one claw. On his dropping the cone and flitting away, I made my advance into the clump (a spruce and a hemlock growing close together and spreading as one tree), hoping to gain a view near enough to satisfy my doubts. So silent they were, that at length, believing them flown, I discarded caution and began to push through the branches, when, bending forward, I saw in the little hollow where I had first come upon them, the salmon-colored head of the male, twitching uneasily from side to side, the feathers of the crest ruffling.

A cautious retreat, a wide circuit, and I again approached from the same side as at first.

I came within full view, scarcely fifteen feet away. I never saw bird so tame. The male seemed uneasy, and would flutter off from time to time, and call in a husky, subdued twitter, from the obscurity of the spruce, to his more confiding mate. At length I sat down within ten feet of them; they took wing on my motion, but soon returned, and fell to work upon the cones, sometimes pecking them on the ground, sometimes flying with one to a

bough near at hand, and bending over, with ruffled necks, searching out the seeds; the ground was littered with the detached scales. They appeared plump, well-fed little creatures, the female in particular. Though both were business-like feeders, the latter seemed to devote herself to it to the exclusion even of fear.

Though I looked carefully at such close quarters, I could not distinguish the cross bill; the bill seemed long, rather heavy; I fancied not stout enough at the base for a grosbeak; in the male, black; in the female, light horn-colored (both?). I noticed the downward curve of the upper mandible.

The male was rosy or salmon-colored; back darker—dusky; wings and tail black (two bars of white in wing—sharply marked); a wash of bluish ash on flanks and grayish below; rump bright salmon; dark line through eye, and dark crescent on cheeks; bill dark. Female grayish olive; wash of yellow on breast and back; dusky and broader crescent on cheeks, and dusky head faintly streaked with dusky (brown?). Wing and tail darker. White (cloudy-buffy) in wings; rump bright yellow. I think they were white-winged crossbills.

Five o'clock: Twenty-three degrees; freezing again; the little rills checked.

A snow-storm coming down from the west over the mountains, white wreaths—bluish, blown like smoke, with the dark blue Mountain beyond; it seems a vast forest fire; you almost expect to see flames burst out at the base of these wavering columns.

The storm gives a misty appearance to the southern

horizon, where the sun is shining under the clouds. Camel's Hump, far away south beyond the storm, is seen through a purple veil.

On the crest of the hill I again heard a distant "tweet." Twice during the morning the same note, faint, uncertain, had caught my attention, but on each occasion I saw nothing. As I faced toward the sound, over the plowed crest came a flurry of wings, a large flock of snow buntings passed close over my head, their black-barred white wings flashing in the sunlight. They flew with a fine sweep, reminding me of sea birds, and passed northward, floating down toward the wood with something of the graceful descent of pigeons.

For an instant the air was full of their weak twittering notes, and then the profound winter silence again settled upon the scene.

It was very cold, but there was little wind, and few clouds in the perfect blue sky. The mountains were bathed in sunlight. Mansfield, hollowed with deep blue shadows, crowned by glittering snow, seemed to sleep in enchantment. A feeling of exaltation and of loneliness crept over me. Sometimes I thought I heard the distant stroke of an axe. Looking across the road, I became conscious of a strict but unobtrusive scrutiny. In the doorway of the shed attached to the upper barn were set the faces of two sheep, the noses in sunlight, the eyes in shadow.

A mass of ice, a mimic glacier, stretches down the middle of the meadow from the springs.

The Mountain is seen at its best in winter, with snow

and ice along the rocky summit—the "bald." In this hoary coating it seems like some great Colossus, maimed and time-eaten, more majestic, more inscrutable, with loftier riddles than the Sphinx.

Pleasant, windless day—a thin cloud. Saw a pair of redpolls; had, I fancied, less of sulphur yellow in plumage. Greenland redpolls?—quite gray.

Out driving, the sleigh slipped along with an easy motion; the minute hailstones stung as they flew into my eyes. Coming up the hill, we startled a flock of snow buntings; they rose silently, made a graceful curve in the air, and settled verily like snowflakes.

The blueness of shadows:

On Luce's Hill the long shadows from the afternoon sun, on the open fields of snow, are so intensely blue that by comparison the sky appears green—a delicate transparent green.

Our shadows, that step with us, are transmuted from dusky and sinister adherents to gay companions, making much of their brilliant tint, stretching over the snow.

This day is perfect winter, clear as a bell, whelmed and softened in sunlight, with an icy-flowing north wind, to which the pines sing, though bare boughs are silent. The trees on the mountains are completely snow-covered —with the sun upon them, even the evergreens show no trace or hint of green. Hogback is a frosted cake, a coral reef—its spots of shadow deep purple-blue.

How beautifully Luce's Hill descends to meet the

nearer ridge, the crumbling edge of its snow-fields rounding down into a blue hollow, against which is imposed the cloudy wood with its dark points of evergreen on Cady's Hill!

Are the shadows bluer looking north than south? I think so; especially when they are thrown along an incline at a more obtuse angle with the ray, on a north slope.

I was rather disappointed in the sunset, which was a trifle obscured; only the more northerly end of Hogback was touched, and that lightly, by a pale magenta tinge. The rest lay white, and after the sunset faded, looked wintry, cold as the uninhabited North. But the more easterly pyramidal point of Sterling was flushed on its southern side. Below was the blue shadow that enveloped all the range as far south as Camel's Hump, and this, the last peak, marking the southern limit, alone caught the sunset.

Far away to the north Eden lay in a rosy haze, so soft as to suggest summer. This distant country, which floats forever in a celestial atmosphere, azure-tinted, empurpled, pale blue spaces, and darker bars and patches, which are its woodlands, now fades from rose to lilac, lilac to blue—transitions of color as subtle and delicate as are seen in sunset clouds.

It has been thawing slightly to-day. The sun is set; long purple bright-bordered clouds—streaks across the sky—float on the limpid golden horizon. The tassels of the pine stir and sway in the south wind, which now blows chilly, and moans at the corner of the house.

This month of this year will be memorable for its sunsets. Yesterday what glory, what tender charm! Such phenomena can have no adequate expression in art: they are too transient, as are the emotions they excite.

To-day, looking south across snow-drifts to the mountains, I observed that the value of the drift shadow was the same as that of the distant mountains, and the difference in color was very slight, the shadow being slightly purple.

Several nights ago, I heard an owl. It was a still dark night, no star visible, but what looked like one—the light in a farmhouse miles away on Luce's Hill. Still the broad snowy fields made a kind of light: it was possible to detect the limits of the south wood. The thermometer stood at about twenty degrees, but there was a damp feeling in the air, as of a thaw; and out of this still, cold, and moist darkness came a muffled hooting. It sounded near at hand, and seemed uttered in a low and melancholy tone, but it may have been the distance that softened it: "Hŏŏhoó, hoó, hoó!"

This morning, the poultry being let out to wander around the yard, the cocks began crowing to Spring.

They rub their eyes and yawn out: "Winter is over. Hurrah for Spring!"—the last with sleepy enthusiasm, cheerfully, but with slurred and inarticulate utterance, like the fervor of drunkards.

It is an undeniable thaw, a continuance of yesterday's melting work. Thermometer forty degrees or there-

abouts; the air mild but damp; the stable-yard repulsive, muddy and manury, but there is a pleasant smell of hay from somewhere.

Leon tapped a maple yesterday, and the sap ran, drip, drip, into the tin pail. This is my first sight of it—thin, limpid, like water, slightly sweetish. Some maples, they tell me, run as sweet as syrup, but these give a less quantity generally.

It is a strange thing to see a gnat dance in the lamplight on this, the night of the twenty-fifth of February.

Out of doors it is overcast, thawing, dismal.

Last night, about nine o'clock, as I looked out of the window after putting out the light, I saw the moon, a broad crescent hanging in the southwest; its rays entered at the window and shone upon the table. The dense furry bough of the pine was dark against this illumination. The wind stirred its tassels.

This morning, which was overcast, and presented in a sombre light the pied landscape of a thaw, I walked in the west pasture. A mist, a kind of drizzling vapor, made a false distance most soft and charming. The lichens on the rocks were vivid.

Sounds carried far on the air—signs of a storm. The screaming of jays, the creak of the ox-sledge carrying logs from the wood, the call of the driver.

Beyond the scattered evergreens I started up a hare. Gaunt, meagre, of a dirty white color, he seemed to embody the sentiment of the thaw—an aspect of it, at least. He bounded away easily, leaping sometimes about ten

feet, and disappeared in a thicket of maple saplings. I noticed the print of his hind feet just in front of the fore feet, not straddling them, so I conclude the fore feet had already left ground as the hind feet fell.

I also saw the tracks of squirrels, and, I think, of foxes.

Coming home, I noticed the lichens—miniature forests of evergreen, here and there some gray variety, much branched and divided, rising like the crown of an ancient and leafless oak. Some of these mimic trees were vermilion-tipped—to the pigmy inhabitants ferns springing to a vast and brilliant florescence, others (palms?) cup-shaped, simple, of a salad green. A strange country this, that gives fertile forests upon bare rocks!

May not this earth have something the same aspect seen from a balloon?

At times, contrasted with the cold cry of the jays, came a broken note, less shrill, less frozen, a sound more appropriate to the thaw. Yet I think it was a jay that uttered it.

Last night, after I had opened my window and was about to get into bed, I noticed the curtain fluttering, and heard a slight rumble under the eaves. The wind was getting up. Presently there began a most lamentable moaning, most human, most demoniac. Lessening, it fell to a low angry mutter, threatening, bovine.

The morning was cloudy; cold showers from the south. I walked out past the pond, where the ice is sunk and a new thin coating formed. I noticed some cracks

made in the embankment by the frost. The sugar-wood beyond is a dull red with the rain-brightened buds.

The walking is difficult. Sometimes I am knee-deep in snow, sometimes ankle-deep in mud. I passed by the old sugar-house in the swamp; numerous tracks of squirrels, foxes(?), and hares, the latter quite fresh, and of the second some rather curious, the fore feet separated, the hind feet falling almost together, so as to form a single indenture in the snow, a triangular track.

Passed beside a dusky copse of evergreens, and against the black hemlock boughs, the diamond-hung boughs.

MARCH

This morning about ten o'clock the thermometer stood at four degrees, and I think it did not go much higher in the course of the day, which was overcast, snowing, and with a steady north wind. I noticed it again at five, and it had gone down a degree.

From about three to four o'clock I walked in the west pasture; I went for the purpose of collecting some balsam boughs, which, being laid on the top of the stove, exhaled a pleasant odor.

The walking was very difficult, owing to the loose snow drifted in between the hummocks and hiding the underlying ice.

The brook could be heard but faintly, muttering under a double covering of ice and snow.

The spruces and balsams were heavily weighted; a touch would send the feathery mass scattered like powder from the ends of the branches.

I passed up on the edge of the old road through a small group of balsams, and on to the ridge among the branching sumachs. The position of the sun might be occasionally detected by an obscure gleam in the gray expanse of the sky. The fine snow sped almost horizontally on the steady wind. Coming home by the pines, I was stopped by a faint note. I saw a bird that I took at first for a blue jay rise from the ground and slip

Lingering Snow (Looking North)

behind an evergreen. Almost at the same moment, with a soft and broken cry, a vermilion-hued bird flew close above my head, swerved suddenly to one side, and disappeared in the boughs of a spruce close on my left hand. In the swift glance upward I saw distinctly the reddish chest, pale belly, and ashy under tail-coverts.

This disappearance was immediately followed by the passage of one darker tinted, that with a powerful and easy flight swept across the pasture and settled in the top branches of a sumach. I waited patiently for the reappearance of the first, for although I felt convinced they were the male and female pine grosbeak, I wanted another glimpse of the vermilion plumage. Had I not seen them, I think I should have recognized the note, so strange, so plaintive.

Casting a glance after the one departed (the female), I was startled to see a flock rise suddenly above the thicket of sumach where she had settled. They rose high into the air, and descended fluttering among the evergreens on the crest of the hill. I immediately set out in pursuit, but before I had retraced my steps to the pine, they were up again, this time sweeping down toward me, over the snowy undulations. They passed within a rod of me, a considerable flock flying rather low. The males were brilliantly tinted—a deep red, almost crimson, on the crown; the females flying showed an orange spot on the rump. Sometimes a thin lisp intermingled with their twitter, which latter sound reminded me somewhat of the distant chant of frogs, sometimes a cry, like the jay's, but fainter and softened, more like a sea bird's, but not so plaintive. They appeared to me

to be as large as robins. They seemed mightily at home. It was a beautiful spectacle. They lit in the pine's swaying boughs, scattering the snow, the bright males contrasting finely with the dark green foliage. It was somewhat difficult to tell these latter, at a little distance, from the sumach cockades, off which I noticed them feeding.

My last sight of them was in the air, making another descent a little farther along the slope, fluttering, falling, changing place, much as I have seen snow buntings do. There certainly is a resemblance in their flight, and also in their twittering note.

The windows are heavily frosted—ferns and stars. I found a corner to peep through at the moon, which is to-night at the full, and rose overclouded, a dusky yellow spot.

The snow still sweeps over the white fields, but the wind is gone down somewhat. I cannot hear the pine.

The moon, shining on the frosted windows, stars the pane with glittering sapphires.

Moonrise:

First, the large, round, flat, silver-gilt surface of the moon, behind the trees on the crest of the hill, shining through the bare boughs.

Second, a faint, indefinable glistening in the snow in some places—on the eastern faces of drifts.

Third, the shadows taking form, dimly.

Fourth, shadows growing darker and contracting.

The other day the golden sunlight, just before the

setting, on the twigs of the little cherry tree at the west end of the garden, gave it the effect of being hung with shreds of gold tinsel.

Again I have seen the pine grosbeaks. This time it was among some small evergreens on the edge of the swamp, a quarter of a mile southeasterly from the farmhouse.

I wandered among the stumps in the clearing, amused by the tracks of mice, making a kind of running pattern on the snow, the line of the long tail twisting about between the little footprints.

It was clear and pleasant, even warm in this spot, sheltered by the rising ground from the keen-edged north wind that had made my ears burn as I crossed over the fields.

Near the group of evergreens before mentioned, I heard a soft twittering—conversational, cheery. I crept around the side of a small spruce, but before I had moved sufficiently to obtain a glimpse of these chatterers, one lit in the tree above my head, a female, followed almost immediately by the salmon-colored male.

Of the plumage of the latter, I was startled by its brilliancy. The crown and the spot on the rump were almost crimson. A wash of rose-color over the breast and on the sides.

The poetry of a thaw—the singing world, the first rippling voice.

The wet woods.

The frost-formed spring-holes in the ice.

Every year winter subsides like the flood—a repetition of such scenes, a renewal of such hopes.

The young shoots and buds of the striped maple a waxy pink.

To-day thirty-seven degrees. Snow, rain, and low mist. Roads in a terrible condition. Drove to Moscow and back, mists creeping low among the ragged tops of hemlock and bare branches. Woods a dull red. Ice in large blocks stranded along the river edge: yesterday's thaw must have raised the river a great deal.

Agonized squeal of wood going into the circular saw, and afterward a hollow deep sound, like the bassest strings of a bass violin, the bow drawn slowly across; something like muffled thunder, but more sonorous. This sound is the recover of the saw-frame rumbling.

Diamond-hung boughs again.

There's so strong a spring feeling, so little prospect of a rally on the part of the defeated Winter, that I fear I have had my last sight for the year of the porphyry mountains—the blue, blue, snow-covered hills sleeping in the golden afternoon sunlight.

In the valley the cocks are crowing.

I was in the sugar-wood for some time, both in the morning and afternoon. Active preparations for sugaring had begun. A tub was set on a slight eminence about fifty yards from the sugar-house, and in this the sap is to be emptied from a wagon in which the pails are collected. A tin pipe runs from this tub to the large wooden vats serving as reservoirs, stationary in the

building. This pipe was coated with snow, and made a straight white line, singular among the contorted branches, the more conspicuous as every twig was made evident by its snow coating. The temperature was about twenty-nine degrees, the wind was raw, from the northeast a slight snowfall sifted through the boughs. A strange, silent, echoless place was the sugar-wood. The men were there drawing out lumber—shadowless but substantial forms, they concentrated in their persons all the color of the colorless scene—the leathery hue of their faces, the yellow of their sheepskin leggings, their homespun blue overalls and blouses; the oxen were a yellowish white, the red flecking was conspicuous.

As they moved about at their work, a bush, a twig would interfere between them and me. Ordinarily the neutral-tinted and open twigs would hardly be noted as an impediment to sight; but now, thickly outlined with snow, the smallest of them was a distinct white line to shut away the object.

It gave the wood something of the depth and mystery of summer; the snow served for foliage. Behind a bush the men lost form and feature and became patches of color. They had the appearance of divers in a forest of coral.

From the fields I hear the strokes of an axe, which the echo doubles and lengthens; shudderingly the wood rings vast and hollow.

Driving.

In the afternoon the wind came up sharp and blustering from the northwest, dispersing the clouds. The

fields looked dry and gray; the ruts began to freeze. But after I got home the wind had gone down. The air was pleasantly cold. I walked through the swamp and across the rocky part of the west pasture, following a fox's track.

The golden afternoon light brought out colors vividly. I rested leaning on the fence. An old road winds here, and just at this point the land is level; it is slightly marshy in summer; young hemlocks grow scatteringly, and a kind of willow and swamp maples.

It was profoundly silent, except that the escape of air or water below the ice I stood upon made a soft popping sound. There was a singing in my ears like the hum of flies; the air was slightly damp; I was in some way reminded of a summer evening.

I looked at the trees illuminated by the mellow light, with the sense of pleasure and almost relief I have often felt then, after the glare of the day.

There was an indescribable suggestion of spring in the air. Until lately I have never had any experience of this season, which has passed while I have been in the city. I have seen a spring in Georgia, in South Carolina, but never in my native country.

Its charm is more delicate than that of any other season. The sad but exquisite intimations of Autumn have hitherto been to me the subtlest expression of Nature. She speaks to the human heart; her voice is pathetic, lovely; but Spring is all sweetness and tenderness; hers is the strong and vital charm of youth, hers the indefinable delicacy and loveliness of childhood.

Even while these thoughts were in my mind, the note

of a chickadee, its winter note, the faint lisp and "day-day-day," came as a voice recalling the delight of autumn, a warning, perhaps, against a vain comparison.

The slender tops of the hemlocks, with delicate beckoning fingers, wave against the blue sky and cream-tinted clouds. The new shoots of the swamp maples are bright red upon the green foliage; the twigs of the willows, too, are red, but darker.

Coming home, I noticed the tracks of hares.

The sun made the sumach cockades a glowing crimson. I see the little white birch catkins.

Two gnats danced in the room at twilight, up and down, up and down, up and down, then suddenly horizontally, then the vertical motion again, like visible points on an invisible leader's baton.

After dinner, somewhere about seven o'clock, the west was still alight. A singular arrangement of clouds. There seemed to be an enormous black bat, with eared head and membranous ribbed wings outspread, hovering over the Mountain; to the right a cloud rose over the summit in the form of an eagle's wing.

The bat dwindled and scattered, changed into many forms and was dissolved; but chancing to glance up, I saw the same form repeated with singular exactness higher in the sky.

Over Sterling there was a white mist like snow; the north looked bleak and inhospitable.

Twilight has closed in early. The snow is sifting over the fields on a southwest wind, that about three

o'clock blew boisterously. I went out driving around by Gold Brook. It was typical March weather; the roads were actually drying off in the wind; the fields looked their palest; most dry and colorless was all the landscape. It being Monday, which I take to be a universal washing day, clothing flapped upon the lines. The fantastical spirits of the wind filled out these convulsed garments in grotesque and malicious caricature of humanity.

Found a moth in one of the sap pails, also small flies and gnats.

The moth was a sphinx, of a terra-cotta color, or pink—an imitation clearly of dead leaves. It was dead, drowned—a Clarence-like ending—"washed to death in fulsome wine."

At the sugar-house I tasted the sap, and found it decidedly sweet, which is owing, I understand, to the freezing of the day previous. The pails are full, with a frozen cake of ice, the mould of the pail, swimming in liquid, and it seems that the water part of the sap freezes, leaving the sweeter part fluid. The early runs are not so sweet as the later, the trees being full of frost.

It began to snow as I crossed the pastures to the south wood, a dense and blinding storm.

At the edge of the wood I heard a wiry chirp, and after much difficulty, so heavy was the snowfall, I caught a glimpse of the bird, high on a tree-top, so small among the large flakes that I took it for a kinglet. From this part of the wood came a strange note, precisely such

a sound as the tight-strung wires of a piano will give being picked, and this I followed (believing it to be a nuthatch) more in the hope of seeing the other bird, for its twitter was less easy to locate than this more pronounced sound, and I have before seen kinglets in the company of nuthatches. I lost them continually; I stumbled on in the snowy wood, trying to work around to the south of their course to obtain a view unobscured by the falling flakes.

Through young beeches and maples I reached a slight eminence. From this point two large basswood trees tower above the rest, and on the incline of their massive trunks snow was settling, emphasizing the variety of movement, and producing an effect of hoary and imposing age. Here the faint note of the nuthatch reached me, mingled occasionally with its hoarser "quah-quah," and a half-articulated "chickadee" revealed the character of its little companion, whom I straightway acknowledged a tricksy spirit indeed. The bird I took to be the nuthatch was small, even smaller, I think, than its companion—the red-breasted, doubtless. It flew with wonderful rapidity, darting from tree to tree, and once circled twice around the trunks of the basswood trees without alighting, and with the dusky swiftness of a bat.

The large and slowly falling flakes, whirling down out of the gray sky, seemed to weigh down my eyelids, causing my glance to decline with them to the ground.

Of late, on these gray cloud-tattered skies, an Indian file of crows, clamoring as they go, gives a wild kind of charm.

In the barn:

Lambs. Maternal fullness and softness in the sheep's ordinarily cold eye; eyes of cows and of the sheep in the interior pen glowing like jewels. The lowing of the cows suppressed, *exactly* like the low notes of a bass viol, sonorous and vibrant.

Hemlock-Spruce (Late Spring)

APRIL

The distant fields in the valley are changing color ever so slightly, from gray to a faint raw greenish tinge.

Hermit thrushes heard to-day in a woody hillside near Moscow, from the river road.

To-night it is warm and windy. The wind comes blowing gustily from the south.

After supper, at about seven, I went out on the piazza, and heard the longed-for and expected note. I went to the edge of the west pasture, which was very obscure in the shadow of the hill, where along the ridge the evergreens were darkly mingled in a cloud of still leafless twigs. Behind were the dusky mountains and the pale salmon strip of sky above them, and floating across this dim expanse, sometimes stifled and carried away in faint murmurs in the gusts of the south wind, came the notes of the hermit thrushes.

When I am dead and buried, or dead and burned, I think something of what was once me will respond at the first spring song of the thrushes. It is the immortal voice that speaks to something dumb and nameless in the human breast, and is answered by a dumb and nameless yearning.

It conveys a kind of immortality upon the listener—it comes out of an immeasurable past, and carries the soul into the immeasurable future. They sing in blissful eternity.

Wonderful notes!

Like the precious moments in life and in art, that are thrilling with emotion, full to the brink of tears.

Notes so varied, clear, and full, or faint as an echo lisping softly, like a comment on the thrilling sweetness of the last, sometimes high almost to shrillness, and again uttered low and with a melodiousness ineffable.

It is not so much like the answering notes of birds, as like a converse of happy spirits.

There's nothing of the mirth of bird songs in this one, neither joyousness nor hurry, but something serene and infinitely sweet, that is neither joy nor sorrow. The notes fall deliberately, as if there were a consciousness on the part of the singers of the precious quality of their utterances—golden drops from the very fount of all sad delight and chastened joy.

Sometimes I hear the purring of a tree toad (Pickering's), the first I have heard this spring.

The piping of the frogs is like a continual and distant jingle of sleigh-bells, but now and again from one, a little nearer, comes distinctly the sustained and melancholy whistle. It is the simplest kind of utterance, a single sad little interrogative pipe, forever uttered in the same key.*

The moon must be almost full to-night. I walked up the road a little way; the air is very dry and warm. There are two sounds that puzzle me—one that seems

* The notes of the common toad and Pickering's hyla or tree toad appear to be confused. The "piping" referred to here, and on page 49, is undoubtedly the note of Pickering's hyla, while the "purring" and (on page 49) "low, prolonged and tremulous sound" are probably the trill of the common toad.

like the faint buzz of a beetle, recurring at frequent intervals and enduring but an instant; this at length, heard in proximity sufficient to detect its real character, discovers itself to be the singular bursting or twanging note of the nighthawk. The other is a ripple, a faint tinkling, that reminds one at once of cricket and tree toad; and as I listen, the tinkle grows louder, and there are intermingled twitterings as of birds. It seems to come from the stone wall or the trench at the side of the road, and I am beginning to wonder if it is not the voices of field mice, and to fancy I see little stealthy creatures gliding among the stalks of weeds and the dead grasses, when suddenly the explanation occurs to me in a burst of memory or some association of ideas, and I recognize in this mysterious sound the peculiar twitter of swifts, passing rapidly overhead, whose notes are softened and carried over in the wind.*

The pine soughs, and tosses its boughs wildly; clouds have gathered over the face of the moon; the dead leaves in the road give an occasional skip of somewhat ghastly sprightliness, and rustle with a crisp and exceedingly dry sound. Truly it seems almost too much to expect of these long-buried leaves, that have danced all summer on the bough, skipped in the high winds of last autumn, and have since lain out of sight and mind for four long months under a heavy covering of snow,

* Those familiar with the flight-song of the woodcock will recognize this as a very good description of the impression made by that performance—the nasal nighthawk-like "peeping" uttered on the ground, followed by the confused medley of wing-whistling and liquid vocal notes as the bird soars in the air. April is much too early for a nighthawk in northern Vermont, and some of the woodcock's notes might easily be mistaken for the swift's.

now to revive and sport on the same terms with the tireless wind.

The obscuring of the moon gives point to a certain wildness that is in the night, a sense of hurry that is almost like alarm. Dark forms, dark places, if it is no more than a hole in the ground, seem to beckon, move, and run in the uncertain light.

March would be the date, or even February, in a warmer climate. Last night, heavy south wind—a cold raw air, driving half-melted snow with a level drift. Usual developments of a heavy wind from this quarter, turning the gable with a loud, lamentable cry; hissing of driven snow in the pauses, mingling with the large roar of the wood, the jumping of shutters in their fastenings, the gusty approach, followed by the silent and stupendous push, as of a vast soft body, against the side of the house, that trembles. Accompanying all this, brilliant and rapid flashes of sheet lightning that showed the white snowy country with an effect peculiarly ghastly. Occasionally, following the brighter flashes, was a low rumble of thunder.

The snow tapped and hissed against the pane, and once after a brilliant flash a crackling as of fire seemed to run from roof to cellar; it was a sudden burst of hail. Between the flashes the night was dark, beyond the usual of dark nights: for no glimmer seemed to take from the snow—the result of the contrast perhaps.

Later it turned to rain or sleet, and the flashes heaved and fluttered in the impending cloud, like heat lightning in summer.

Morning under these conditions wild and strange.

Six inches of soft, clinging "sugar snow" having fallen yesterday, the country has resumed its winter aspect, even to the Mountain's heavily frosted silver ridges. But above is a soft sunny spring sky, and robins, snowbirds, and song sparrows flit over the snow-fields and perch on the snow-weighted spruces—a singular and fairyland combination. Especially strong is the song sparrow's song, so full of spring and sunny suggestions. Indeed the other birds, less courageous, find no heart for singing.

What delicate snow-tints, purple, pink, changing to a blue so clear that it becomes greenish in contrast—indeed it may be green rather than blue—I cannot tell. How light, how transparent are the shadows!

[Two years later]

In the wood, where the snow has left a flattened surface of compressed and soggy leaves.

Many voices—that of the white-crowned sparrow, is it? so long-drawn, strange, and solemn; and a rippling, tinkling sound, a varied song, wonderfully sustained—the winter wren? Robins everywhere, inarticulately cheery. And for the first time this year a hermit thrush, from far in the darkness of the hemlocks, faint and yet distinct, that immemorial voice.

The squeal of a hawk, the mew of a nuthatch, and later, after sunset, the hoarse crowing and hooting of an owl. A day or two ago everything was silent, dead: to-night the wood echoes and rings with innumerable sounds.

MAY

On the road from Moscow to the Waterbury stage road, by the edge of the yellow and brimming river, two uproarious red-winged starlings that gave every now and then, among harsher cries, a sweet flute-like note, somewhat in character (though the comparison is an injustice) like the piping fluty sound of some stop of a melodeon—coagulated sweetness, the very honey of sound. Here also, in the green-tipped willows, flitted myrtle warblers.

Warm spring rains fall, white mist and clouds cling to the woods and overflow the valleys; through the rifts the farm-dotted slope of Sterling grows daily a softer and more vivid green.

Spring-beauty, pale but rosy-veined, shows in wood, pasture, and along the highways.

All day long the little ringing call of tree sparrows is heard, and robins sing, and song sparrows.

Two days ago the lilac leaves were fairly out. The maples have flowered.

One seems to be in a vast greenhouse in this moist spring weather. I cannot hear the fall of the rain as it drifts so fine, but I hear the splash from the eaves.

Last night at about half past nine I looked out of my window. A heavy white mist obscured everything below, except the near acclivity, the rocky crown of the west

pasture. From this cloud that enveloped the horizon and hid the landscape, fine web-like mists floated up and overspread the sky, that seemed illumined by a white boreal glory. Behind and between this veil, the stars shone with varying brightness.

As I entered my bedroom, through the window (which opens eastward) I saw a cloud on the shoulder of Hogback that seemed to be a source of light in itself, so impregnated was it with moonlight.

A dense mist hung over the garden and in the neighboring fields. Before the moon had risen, half the shining round appeared, a faint prismatic ring, Saturn-like, surrounding it. The mists disappeared like magic, and like magic they returned, overwhelmed the scene, hid the garden, hid the large dim outlines of the barns, hid the mountain, and, slowly thickening, smothered up the moon herself. She turned from gold to yellow, from yellow to green, from green to a pale colorless gleam, and so went out.

The murky night rang with piping of frogs and a low, prolonged, and tremulous sound, the trill of Pickering's tree toad.

And once so faintly as to be almost unrecognizable, but the second time quite clearly, I heard the broken melodious note of a song sparrow.

Little blue butterflies now.

It has been threatening rain all day—and now it falls. The end being accomplished, the noisy south wind is less wild.

The mountains are partly obscured in the mist, indi-

cated so faintly that their outline is undiscoverable to half-shut eyes—their color is the color of mist, but above, the sky is of the most delicate purple, and in this indefinable tint suggests sunshine behind the veil.

The fresh cool spring wind fanning the plants, the young hemlock bushes, along free, joyous, and singing water-courses.

Yesterday afternoon, bright *green* shadows—strong afternoon rays—on yellowish field.

There's a heavy cloud lying in the dip between Sterling and Luce's Hill, which hides all the Mountain, except high up, where, like a chain of celestial islands, or darker clouds on the universal gray, is the edge of the great profile. This heavy mass of vapor has overlapped the serrate crescent of Sterling, and is slipping down into the enchanted hollow. A faint reddish light kindles in the grayness, lighting up with a sombre gleam the sky behind the waving and indistinct outlines of the mountains. The gleam deepens to a dull glow, and as rapidly and as mysteriously vanishes. The heavy vapors rise about the Mountain, and hide all but the last and highest point of the chin.

Out of doors (though it is so cold that I had closed the windows and kindled the fire) I heard the melodious lisp of hermit thrushes.

To-night heaven is divided in light; the east has few stars, and a red and angry planet glows on the horizon; but the west flashes light—sparkles and clashes—beams cold and brilliant as swords. One might hear the scintillations—keen, musical as an icicle shattering on ice.

Driving up the hill on my way home, I heard a kind of flicker cry above me, and a dark bird (it seemed to me black as a blackbird, from the view I had of it, its back only) swept over my head and lit, woodpecker-like, on the trunk of an elm in the pasture. A broad bar of white in the wings (edged with red?) and a crimson occiput and crown. I think it must have been a logcock (pileated woodpecker), so-called woodcock in these parts.

After reaching the house I hurried out into the pasture to obtain, if possible, another glimpse of it, but I was too late.

The sky had become overcast, and a strong but warm wind blew from the south. The distant woods, their rounding tops, took a stronger tint under the darkening sky.

The delicate foliage made an inviting mystery, half hiding, half revealing the lovely nakedness of Nature.

The white-spotted buff hides of Jersey cows showed among the tender greens, as they moved quietly, cropping the soft herbage, violet-studded. Their eyes of luxurious contentment, lustrous, with the purple gleams and soft brown lights of a mountain brook, its depths and shallows. As I descended the hill, with the velvet touch of the caressing south wind upon my cheek, I felt with intensity the delight of living. The joy of life was like a glory around me. So should one feel at all times—such a mood should be the mental habit of a healthy creature. One should not need this sweet-scented wind, this heart-lifting spring season, for an inspiration. There should be no times of indifference, or unfulfilled

desire. Every hour should give enough to exalt it; every season should have its peculiar and equally appreciated delights.

Later I saw a picture of Spring.

It was about half past four. The rain had ceased, but the wind blew fresh and vigorous from the south-west. The cows were huddled near the bars. The old sorrel horse galloped restlessly along by the fence, neighing to some mares in the opposite pasture. The white pine tossed in the wind, and above, vast golden-white clouds sailed in the clear light-blue sky.

I climbed over the rocks, in among thickets of young maples, red and sugar, and aspens.

As I walk by the edge of the wood and listen to the thrushes, they seem like spirits conversing in some unearthly language, a tongue of unearthly beauty.

One of the charms, perhaps the principal charm, of their song is its variableness. By this I don't mean variety, but a difference in the degree of excellence of various notes uttered by the same bird. It seems as if the singer were striving to re-utter some exquisitely melodious note; sometimes in a high, sometimes in a lower key. One attempt follows the other, all most dulcet, but lacking some quality of the preëminent utterance. Each time you listen with an increasing interest—you hold your breath, expecting the promised marvel, and when finally that perfection of melodious sound is reached, you feel a creeping, a shiver of intense and strange delight. The precious infrequency of the note!

I welcome the freshness, the coolness, the softening and intensifying charm that is in this gentle spring rain.

In the wood the veery calls, and darts across the road, slipping among the dense undergrowth. I see, I think, a three-toed woodpecker, dodging behind a tree trunk, taking furtive peeps at me, like a tricksy goblin.

Now is the mystery of the wood reëstablished. The eye is invited, baffled, and charmed amid a quivering, fluttering, living sea of green. Voice, life, expression, have returned to Nature.

May evenings.

To-night the sun set in a limpid sea of gold. It was chilly for the time of year; stars quivered in the pale glow of evening; there was a leaf-fluttering wind, and a sense of hurry, a breathless delight, almost alarm, in the impending night.

The hired man is walking toward the barn, whistling a quick tune, a hornpipe; he takes lengthy strides, a more forcible accompaniment than a brisk step. Above the palings of the garden his shoulders move with deliberate emphasis.

I say to myself, "The curtain rises. Rustic crosses over the stage." He enters the barn; his whistling, subdued, finally ceases.

A pause. Swifts and swallows twitter, circle, and dip. Song sparrows gurgle on fence posts; from the wood the wiry song of the veery, the serene and melodious voice of the hermit thrush; and, somewhere out of the air, scattered tinkling harp-strings and honey-drop-

pings of sound, shaken out over the meadows in the mad and merry flight of bobolinks.

Suddenly on the crown of the hill appear two little shapes. They are on the scene with a run. They pause, they clasp hands, and four nimble and soundless naked feet twinkle on the slope. Two little boys, as frolic as elves or brownies, impelled to the liveliest motion by an excess of life—life at its quickest, flashing swift and sparkling from the fount. They put a constraint upon themselves to walk three yards—their steps quicken—in an instant it is a run. Seeing me, they advance more slowly, but not without evidences of the brimming and effervescing energy within; the too sober pace of walking is broken by sudden hops and bounds.

They are arrayed in what are but too evidently the garments of an elder generation, curtailed to their lesser dimensions. One wears a round stiff-brimmed hat; the other's hat is brimless, but he has on a shirt with a design of large round black spots. They have concealed about their persons whistles (of leatherwood, probably), from which, bounding, turning, hopping as they approach, they produce a low and hollow piping. They neither speak nor look at one another, other than in a chance and passing glance—outward communication seems superfluous, their spirits leap in such perfect sympathy.

To-night, just before sunset, pine linnets and goldfinches flitting about in the boughs of the apple trees, among the blossoms. The goldfinch utters a sweet canary-like "twēē, twe-it."

In the pasture, where the dusk of evening is gather-

ing, the melodious harshness, the ringing, wiry chant of the veery, beside which the sweet lisp of the hermit thrush is almost insipid. Through the misty dimness on the opposite slope, moving down into the hollow, Henry leads the mare, and the stalking colt follows with awkward bounds.

The three-quarter moon is gleaming silvery-bright among the top leaves of the maples in the dooryard.

A twilight walk.

The grove of young and densely growing sugar maples east of the Pilgrim wood was in almost full and fresh leaf; the slender stems shone palely in the shadow of the deep foliage. Even in open places the prevailing twilight (for the sun had set some time since, and only a dull glow remained on the clouds behind the mountains) obscured and confused the features of the ground; it was as if a shallow wave from the concentrated darkness in woody places had overflowed the surface of the earth—the turn of the tide.

In among this heavy leafage, the hermit thrushes answered one another in their measured and thrilling tones; and there, also, the tawny thrush, the veery, sounded its loud emphatic call, and from time to time its strange song.

No note that I have ever heard, not even the hermit thrush's, seems to me so sylvan a sound as this; the very word suggests it—sylvan. It can only be described by the conjunction of opposite terms: it is sweetly harsh; a ringing, wiry sound; a succession of notes, blended, yet distinct, beginning softly and slightly increasing in vol-

ume, like the circling ripples where a stone has fallen in still water; and as the ripples swell, so every repetition of this enchanting song seems to widen to the imagination the cool and dim vista in which it is uttered.

It is the spell that opens the mystery of the woods, and, like the notes of all thrushes, except the robins, it has the precious quality of deliberate and cherished utterance. The song is pitched much lower than the single note or call, which, sounding close at hand, startles one with the revelation of the singer's nearness, so like a ventriloquist's trick is the change of tone; the song having seemed to the listener to come from some little distance, subdued by a leafy passage.

On the higher places in the west pasture a wind is stirring, although below the air is still and heavy, and every pause brings the high-pitched pipe of mosquitoes. But on the higher places the wind frees me of these unwelcome companions; and there I sit down to rest on a steep rock, the summit of which is on a level with the tops of the young trees beneath.

There is no sound so significant of summer, I think, as the rustle of leaves—the very voice of Nature, low, but almost ceaseless. Yet it is too level and unvaried a sound for speech, but still so intensely expressive of being—of life, that no other simile would suffice to describe it, unless it should be called the very breath of Nature, and this seems the more just, that listening to it I find myself trying to exclude all other sounds, just as when one listens to the breathing of a sleeper.

A robin chucks and chatters and flies close to me in evident distrust, but finally alights in a tree-top, and

bursts into his broken, cheery daylight warble—a strange note at this time, when the solitary thrushes are silenced.

Returning, I pass down the southern slope of the pasture, where, not far from the large pine, the flock of sheep are gathered and have settled themselves for the night—dim whitish forms huddled here and there among the sweet-scented hollows; ewes with their lambs lie sometimes in little encampments apart from the main body. A few are alarmed, and move away as I pass close by them; one lamb follows me with an expression of intense and foolish curiosity.

Leaving the small growth behind, and approaching the open, I hear the bizzing of nighthawks, and the piping of frogs is very loud; but the little awful voice of the spring tree toad is hushed—perhaps the night is too dry.*

The sneezing and hoof-beats of a horse in the pasture opposite, across the road, are exceedingly loud and near, although the animal is invisible, so thick is the air.

Far down in the valley lights tremble and palpitate; the stars, less bright, are peeping out.

Two or three times lately (sitting alone in my room at night, or lying awake in bed) I have been startled by the clear loud jingle of a song sparrow; and last night I heard suddenly a field sparrow's long rippling note.

If the large-eyed hermit thrush presents an elfish aspect, there is also something freakish and sprite-like in the demeanor of the veery, in its general appearance

* "The piping of frogs" must be the notes of the hylas, and the "spring tree toad" was probably the common toad.

and expression closely resembling the hermit thrush. If it is less shy, it is more startling: its swift short flights, its cheat of ventriloquism, the loud abrupt note heard here, there, on every hand, which the ear can hardly reconcile as coming from the same source that gives so strange, caressing, and almost musing an utterance in the song.

Verily the thrushes have inherited the spirit of the elves and the dryads.

The hermit thrush sings not long after his arrival, but the veery allows a long interval to elapse between his coming and his song. He cannot sing in bare open branches; he must flit unrecognized, silent, except for a loud and vibrant call, until the leaves have come. He must have the mystery of the leaves, a hiding—the sylvan singer whose voice is the heart of the mystery.

To-night I heard his song ring up from the swamp, that dreamy and ecstatic tone, that swooning sweetness, spiced with a bitterness. His is the last exquisite touch, the crowning charm, the very flower of bird song—and yet, as I write this, I feel as if I did wrong to the immortal spirit of the hermit thrush.

June

JULY

After the tornado of yesterday, walk in the south wood, where branches are strewn, and trunks prostrate; even while there I hear a tree come down with a splintering sound—a prolonged crash.

As I cross the mowing in the long grass, the ripe nodding heads of timothy look like a purple ripple on a green sea.

The strange and elfin look of the thrush. Its large eye—its looks are no less distinguished than its song.

The other night a hoot owl in the sugar-wood.

A flock of snowbirds uttering a hard unfamiliar cry, and I hear the chickadees make their winter note. Thermometer all day fifty-eight degrees at highest.

Few stars in moon-flooded sky. Stars shone dim, fainting in the pale sky. Moonlight—almost full moon.

What a walk in the cool night air—so ample a night! Such refreshing air, with a hint, a tinge of iciness. "One star of such abundant lustre hung low above that pallid gleam"—faint suggestion of a semi-sunset hue above the western hills—a pale dawning at nine o'clock.

Loud sound of running water, wherever water runs, falling of a sudden on the ear—difference of degrees of silence, even in country, by day and night. At a quarter

past eight, birds—mountain-side, the valley, ringing with answering calls. Later (a thrush?) a soft musical call out of the darkening woods.

Spider webs in the air; winged things—moths—flying, a large one fluttering in front of my eyes. Sweet scents. Gurgling, tinkling waterfalls. Quantities of fireflies—hillside spangled—on grassy mound, dancing under the moon.

AUGUST

YESTERDAY, under a sky of portentous rain, I walked in the west pasture; indeed a scattering of cold drops was in the air, and the wind blew by puffs and flurries from the south. I stopped before a thicket of sumach that stood arrayed on the slope like a band of green-coated warriors, each crest conspicuous with its crimson-red cockade. Suddenly there was a stir and commotion in the silent ranks, and the gust, upturning the pale under sides of the leaves, passed like a shivering gleam of swords among them—a martial salute, most thrilling and dramatic.

On the Mountain I saw young redpolls among the dwarfed balsams at the very summit. It is curious that they should breed there.*

Here, from the tent the other day, young snowbirds in the branches of the pine. And yesterday evening, following a high frog-like note, I found on the twigs of a raspberry bush a little round soft yellow-brown ball, checked off like a large variety of raspberry. It was a little goldfinch, its note an exceeding high-pitched, infantile, innocent sound, an unmodulated repetition of

* Possibly these were pine siskins, as there is no record of redpolls breeding in New England. [The editor is indebted to Mr. Francis H. Allen for suggestions in footnotes on pages 44, 45, 57, 61, and 163.]

"ba-bee, ba-bee, ba-bee." It made no effort to avoid my grasp, and nestled quietly in the hollow of my hand. Only when I showed it the canaries in their cage did it struggle and utter its little call, evidently mistaking the canary for its parent.

Going back into the road to replace this one on its raspberry bush, I found another; but the second, though apparently of the same brood, was larger and better able to use its wings.

I think perhaps at this time of year that the ash is the most vividly green of any tree.

OCTOBER

This afternoon in the swamp, where the south wind stirred the remaining leaves of the birches and lifted the flat sprays of hemlock and fir, looking southward the light was soft and glittering on the moving foliage, and made of the naked twigs a silver net, like a spider's web. The voices of the red squirrel, of the snowbird, and the nuthatch and the drum of the woodpecker were heard. From beneath a fallen spruce a rabbit started and leaped in a wide circle, pausing at shelter by a hemlock stump or among the débris of a fallen tree, sitting erect with ears laid back. No hint yet of winter in her coat. A young white pine tree, smooth of bark, slim and tapering, with boughs of a bright green—the brightest piece of color in the swamp—lay half-uprooted by the heavy wind of last Saturday.

To-night a filmy thickening of the air, a blue haze upon the mountains, soft but bright; against this, the dark forms of young spruces, the curving lines and triangles of bare boughs, the pale surface of the pasture; above, a moon less bright, but more golden in color, and surrounded by a circle of faint radiance.

The sunset very beautiful, lilac, purple, magenta, those reposeful combinations of red and blue predominating—the clouds long, flimsy, scattered and wild in distribution, like mares'-tails.

Much charm in the evening, something caressing, yet startling, in the soft but gusty wind; there is mystery with repose, and yet a sense of hurry and flutter.

NOVEMBER

To-DAY has been cloudy, with a southeast wind. Passed over elevated and lonely road that commands an extended view—to-day a waste of cloudy darkness. The hills, when not wholly obscured in the mist, were dark purple below an inky sky; sometimes the patches of naked woods showed pale upon the landscape, which about sunset time was sunk in portentous gloom.

Later the wind increased, the air was filled with the roar of the distant woods. The pine before the door tossed and surged, and the wind rushed through it with the sound of a mighty torrent. The naked trees joined the uproar in a hollow rumble, like the roll of drums. Dead leaves rose and spun in the air, speeding toward one out of the darkening mist.

To-day saw a young or very tame snow bunting.

This morning showed a gray world and a heavy sky. Out driving, the loose snow proved a difficulty, balling heavily on Polly's hoofs. Clearing in afternoon; shafts of gleaming sunlight across the valley. Little hemlocks and conical spruces snow-encrusted, snow tracing on the edge of the woods following branch and twig. Later, patches of blue sky, and beautiful towering cloud-forms. Went down the road, tempted by the tameness of the snow bunting that for several days has made it her

haunt. I took bread with me in the hope of feeding her. She would allow me to approach within a few yards and throw crumbs almost upon her, when, taking fright, she would spread her glancing white wings and gain a safer distance with a swift low flight.

On the promise of a fine sunset, walked toward the Governor's woods. There, among bare trees, still in the cold twilight, beyond their black boughs I saw the "cold fire" of a winter sunset—Romeo's fantastic coupling of opposites made truth.

The wood was silent; although a faint wind was blowing, the delicate twigs were stiff and motionless, finely drawn on the sunset, where the general amber dispersion of light was broken by dark and solid clouds, and on the crown of the hills glowed a bright metallic red—almost rosy.

Across the fields, home. Little grassy tracks in the snow mark the peregrinations of the calves and horses. The Mountain shows vast and hoary. The eye with delight follows on, over snowy track and dusky wood, far to the blue wave of the northern hills.

I look back at the glowing sky and the leafless tree-tops; then at the dark rich loam, newly turned by the plow, at the snow-covered pasture—its wide sweep and cold bare outline against the sky. Winter! it is a word to conjure with. I felt an impulse of delight, vague as instinct, tugging at my heart. Almost I begin to hold opinion with Pythagoras, that in some previous existence I knew another life—that of some wood-haunting, winter-loving creature.

To-day Mr. Cobb showed me a mink and a fox skin;

Henry trapped both animals near the farm. The foxes cross the ridge of the hill, passing from one wood to the other. Henry caught two last night.

Went with Mr. Cobb to his sugar-house, which is being fitted to receive a second evaporator. He has eight hundred tin buckets and pipes. Last year tapped nine hundred trees. Sometimes, he says, when the sap is running well, one can hear it fall, tap, tap, into the pails all about one in the wood.

A rainy dull November day; wind from the south.

About a quarter past three, walk. Thermometer in the neighborhood of forty-two degrees. No rain. Slightly condensing mists, hanging low on the hills. Over the wet and leathery surface of fallen leaves in the dim and indistinct wood, the faint light, in the absence of shadow that so helps the eye in relation to form and limit, made the wood as indecisive as twilight.

Southward I heard voices and the fall of an axe—sometimes clear and sharp, stroke on stroke, with a slight ringing reverberation, sometimes muffled.

I came out on the pasture, which I call the region of Christmas trees. The small full spruces looked soft and furry in the mist, and very dark. The woods in the distance were a pale mauve tint, the evergreens bluish; they seem taller.

Sounds:

The voice of the hired man directing the plow. Below a certain degree in the sound the voice occasions no response, but when raised loud and harsh the echo rattles in the thin belt of trees by the swamp. The grinding of

the plow in the furrows can be distinctly heard a hundred yards away. It is the voice of angry expostulation that forces the echo. A note of satisfaction, of cheery encouragement, drops musically and sinks on the damp air.

A squirrel's bark from the swamp sounds clear and loud, but the whistling and purring interlude comes very faintly. The note of a chickadee, so indistinct as to be a characterless sibilant, something like the "answering shrill of the gauze-winged katydid" heard from a distance of a summer night.

Home by the road, passing the meadow, where some cows are waiting at the gate. Among them is a partly Jersey heifer with a peculiar development of a winter coat, a growth of longish hairs on the forehead, like a horse's forelock. They are very tame, gentle, and curious. They press up to the fence, thrust their heads through the bars to sniff my boots and lick my coat.

While I was watching the cows, the oxen came down the road over the hill from plowing. Being large, white, red-flecked Durhams, they are conspicuous gaunt forms in the muffling twilight, the large iron ring on the yoke clanking louder as they approach.

DECEMBER

This morning there was a high wind from the south-southwest. Nature in these moods is satisfying: no matter how high she raves, she cannot rant; you are always conscious of reserved power, as actors say. The leaping snowflakes vaulting the stone wall opposite, and flying straight at the windows, seem intelligently participant in the exultation of the storm, and yet, out of the direct force of the wind, they circle slowly, and meet the ground with a soft conclusive touch that seems to indicate a grateful sense of repose.

This southwest wind sometimes develops a spirit too boisterous for the comfort and safety of many of Nature's children. The white pine in front of the door lost one of its heavy under branches, which, being weighted with ice, snapped in too rough a greeting of the wind. Yet they seem on excellent terms—nevertheless it is the steady icy flow of the north wind that induces the pine's best music.

Among the Pilgrims. I sit on a stump at the northern edge of the wood, and look far over the dun fields and white roads to the Eden mountains. The northern sky imitates the colors of the landscape, dun and dark blue, and just at the very point of north there is a break in the clouds, and a clear and precious glimpse of pale

Hogback at Sunset

blue sky. The northeastern horizon has the appearance of a summer storm, the black ragged curtain overhanging a blank illuminated sheet of gray, as of rain. Against this, the bare boughs and few tawny beech leaves present a picture that is a very vivid recalling of autumn.

There is an old boulder in the Pilgrim woods, and the mouldering mossy sides are further softened by the powdery ridges of snow. I saw some green ferns.

A small but half-blasted ironwood (hop-hornbeam) punctured in circles with most curious precision. Woodpeckers? I noticed the newer punctures followed on the trunk in spirals.

On the rocky pasture, the mosses in part absorb the snow, which falls mostly in a half-melted form more like hail, into their spongy interstices. They are therefore partly on the surface of things, enough to hint at their form and color. The dry pale green, the purplish brown, and the lilac have thus the most beautiful appearance, apparently just silvered over by the snow. As a surface to walk upon, they are a luxury greater than a Turkey carpet, being as soft, and of more elasticity.

Under the large and generous-reaching white pine I sit, leaning against the trunk, and listen to the wind. There is no tree that gives so soft, so sonorous a sound, particularly in the higher (tenor?) tones.

The other day I saw a pine grosbeak in the cranberry bush in front of the house. He seemed very tame. I was stealing past him to go in and get my glass, but just then two flew out from the pine close at hand, and he took flight with them. The suddenness of their flight

suggested the alacrity of alarm; they sprang into the air, and flew rapidly southward, with a plaintive and broken cry.

This morning clear and beautiful; thermometer about thirty-two degrees, cold steady northwest wind.

In the afternoon to the village. At the blacksmith's shop, waiting for Polly's shoes to be changed and the points sharpened. The forges worked by means of old-fashioned bellows; the accumulation of odd bits of scrap-iron, the inevitable environment of every blacksmith, so universal and so unused that it seems a kind of conventional setting—stage properties.

I took the opportunity to walk up F.'s hill, where I have not been now for over a year. The moment I set foot in the little plateau, its peculiar charm was upon me. I think of all places this must always seem the most beautiful to me. I picked a few white violet leaves half hidden under the snow, where the white violets have never failed me before.

I took off my coat, for it is always warm and balmy in this spot, sheltered from winds (all except the north-east), and sat down at the foot of one of the naked old maples. The view was at once strange and familiar. The bare trees threw open much that was formerly obscure, the course of the river in particular. The only snow visible from this point lies along the pastures on the higher slopes of Hogback, the valley a stretch of bare fields, in which the evergreens of the graveyard are prominent. I walked around the plateau and renewed my acquaintance with the trees, the gnarled old apple trees, the majestic group of maples in the centre, the

white birch, aspens, and cherries that crown the knoll at the southern extremity, and the alder bush near by.

I even climbed the crest in search of a beech that I once thought of painting, and so had a view of snow-crowned Mansfield. I was sorry to see one of the old ashes on the slope uprooted and prostrate. But nowhere was there the trace of an axe. It is this retired reposeful character that makes this hill so charming. It seems to be a place overlooked and neglected—a forgotten nook. The farm is too much a farm, the fields are fenced carefully to their limit, and every woody spot has its barrier close in its shadow; but here fences are a decayed institution: the pasture gives freely upon wood and orchard.

What lends an added charm to this solitary nook and makes its repose doubly appreciable is that although it is so cozily hidden, and seems to lie lonely, belted with hill and wood and open only to the sky, yet the sounds of the village penetrate its quiet; they rise to it softened by distance—the crowing of cocks, the rattle of wagons, the ringing of forges.

Waiting for Leon at the schoolhouse, looking across the hotel grounds, I saw the clouds rosy-tinged over the western hills. This was no less the revivifying of old and lovely impressions.

Coming out from the wood on the meadow east of the farm buildings, elevated much above them, a perfect picture of Winter—the sky a uniform leaden gray, the mountains slaty-blue against it, the snowy outline of Mansfield, that from this point holds the centre of the

picture with an effect of towering grandeur, faintly indicated. The sun must already have set; there is no light in the southwest, but directly south there is a faint gleam. The thin smoke from the farm rises against the Mountain; the picture is rapidly dissolved into the wintry dusk.

One of the men came down from the barn, and before going indoors brushed his boots off with a broom that is set in the back porch for that purpose, accompanying himself with his tuneless jerky whistling—a primitive strain, a few notes doubtfully accordant, which, like the jarring tones of the hard-handed men of Athens, seemed the air expressive of the hired man. After he had closed the door, some disjointed notes came somewhat fainter, "heard off," as after an exit, when the stage is left vacant.

This afternoon the wind blew steadily, but with a soft touch, from the southwest. Out walking in the west pasture. The evergreens are tossed violently in the wind, the pines turn pale, the hemlocks are touched with silver, only the spruces never change color; there is something admirable in their unchanging vividness of hue, a suggestion of sturdy indifference. The hemlocks seem to acknowledge a chill in the wind; as it stirs in their branches with a silvery gleam, they seem to shiver. How velvety they appear, looking north on the side exposed to the ruffling gust!

The mountains are sharply outlined—Camel's Hump rises into the exultant windy sky, against the broken golden lights, under the clouds southward. To the north

the sky is open, crossed by massive scattered clouds. From time to time the sun bursts out, with a strength that fairly makes one open one's eyes. The landscape glows; every hint of color is revealed to the utmost. I come upon two old balsam poplars of considerable size, whose ragged acute-angled boughs are interesting against the sky—the moving clouds. I notice a chickadee on a dead tree, and afterward flying among the evergreens. He is not lugubrious to-day, with his hoarse "deedeedeedee"; he flies blithely, uttering an elastic chirp. He is busy earning his living—or getting his dessert. He earns it by his beauty and his courage. He is an admirable spectacle of courageous innocence; a lovely little bird.

It is an unspeakable delight to be out to-day, to feel the rush and hear the tumult of the wind.

At the farm are two fan-tailed pigeons, late importations from Ohio. They are out sunning themselves and fluttering on the windy ridge of the stable. They perhaps think it is spring.

Just before sunset there was a strong golden glow upon the woods northward, and the shadows became, by contrast, a clear blue.

I was going to say a memorable sunset; but it is difficult to keep a sunset in memory, no matter how deeply one may be impressed at the time. It is as if an exquisite and complex melody should be played once, and only once.

There are sunsets that seem peculiar to the season, and some that express a mood appealing to certain emotions: it may be that it is a matter of memory and asso-

ciation. But this sunset (as all sunsets that disclose, beyond heavy clouds, a clear and pale illumined space—an unfathomable, illimitable sea of light) is, in my mind, as the background and atmosphere of Romance.

I was suddenly aware of the crescent moon, white when I first spied it, but after I had gone indoors it shone with a clear and cold splendor.

Long after the heavier masses of clouds had lost their gold edges and were left in outer darkness, small shredded fragments, apparently behind them, were of a delicate pink, against the blue and lovely green of the illumined sky.

Last night an exceedingly high wind with some snow —a good deal drifted.

At noon to-day I saw a flock of whitewings sweep across the garden, truly like large snowflakes, only they sped in the eye of the wind. The direction they took was southwesterly. I walked over the south pasture to the wood, in hope of getting another glimpse of them, but without success. As soon as the thermometer sinks to the neighborhood of zero (its highest was eight degrees to-day, from noon to half past three) and the winds bluster, as soon as the climate becomes temperate from their point of view, they come speeding down from the terrible arctic solitudes.

Stepping out into the wind to-day was like a plunge in cold water—it took my breath away.

This evening the wind seems to have abated its force; the stars and the crescent moon shine tranquil and brilliant.

Yesterday was cold but windless, with a slow continuous fall of minute star-shaped crystals, the flake at its finest.

To-day a high wind; I notice again that hollow sound, as of the roll of muffled drums, that the wind makes in near leafless trees. The sugar-wood roared like the surf after a storm, with an underlying deep tone, and sometimes angrily as the grasping undertow on a pebbly strand.

To-day noticed a blue jay hopping about in the door-yard. The black crest is velvety; the blue along the neck, shoulders, and back is a beautiful color, but dull and purplish. The brilliancy of the plumage is in the bright gleaming metallic blue of the wings and tail. A gorgeous bird; its splendid plumage is a delight to the eye, but its sly ways, its dandified air, and its harsh note destroy your sympathy. It is not classed among the cherished of Nature's wild creatures.

The other night, after sunset, a man passed down the road, a muffled figure, dark and obscure; the moon had not yet risen, but there was a kind of pale brightness that seemed rather to emanate from the ground (snow-covered) than from the sky; and the indistinct form received a singular significance from the gleaming steel head of the axe slung over his shoulder. The more obscure the man's form, the more significant this cold and sinister gleam.

In the afternoon a flock of snow buntings in the mowing, toddling in the snow, fighting, flirting their

wings, and suddenly taking fright, or on a common impulse rising in a cloud and sweeping over the fields. In the snow they did not appear to be very white—their brown markings and the black wing-bars were most apparent; but in flight, against the dark sky and darker wood, the display of white wings was dazzling.

This morning there was a soft feeling in the air, a moist touch in the wind, that was spring-like.

This afternoon the sun came out and threw lines of brilliant light across the dark hills. A slight and intermittent fall of snow, a few flakes floating on the edge of the sunshine. The deep yellows of the near fields and the excessive blueness of the distance give the landscape at this time of the year peculiar interest, the transitions being sudden.

The farms in the valley on the road that crosses to West Hill lie very pleasantly. A farm ought to suggest, better than any other collection of buildings whatever, a reposeful permanence. These farms that lie in the very palm and peaceful centre of the valley give this impression, lacking to those that seem to cling uneasily to hillsides.

Besides this, the formation of the land at this spot helps the impression. The mountains rise high on the east and west, and yet at breathing distances; to the south they dip and meet and seem to form a notch, or narrow and difficult channel to the outer world, and crowning the depression, of a fainter blue to indicate its distance, rises the peak of Camel's Hump. The valley

widens and lies open to the north, bounded by a blue wave of hills, low on the distant horizon.

Looking north gives wings to the imagination, and, lacking this outlet, the present nestling would be perhaps imprisonment.

There are beautiful patches of woodland here, the maples much intermixed with evergreens, which show in interesting contrast upon the purple shadow of the underwood scenes.

Rain and mist.

The evergreens along the ridge east of the Iron Spring road are beautiful. They assert themselves nobly on this naked landscape. The deciduous trees among them are faint as smoke—a reddish cloud that hovers in among the solid green branches. There are several openings into this wood, that yawn like the mouths of caverns and are infinitely suggestive—they invite your fancy, they seem the openings into Fairy-land, the introduction to a thrilling robber story.

Mingled with the purple cloud of twigs, wreaths of mist float among the spruces and hemlocks.

Of the cloudy appearance of twigs, the best effect is perhaps in apple orchards, where the trunks (grayish in clear, and black in rainy weather) seem set about by a kind of dusky halo.

The sober hues of this landscape, especially of the distance, are very restful, the proper tone after the glare of snow-covered fields. The first thaw revealed green grass in many places; this time (thaw number two) there are none such, but all a dull and sombre dun color.

The fields where grain has been cut, wheat or barley or oats, show the whitish stalks, like the edge of ruffled velvet. The pastures (palest in summer) are richest in color now; where a kind of sorrel has grown they show a dull orange, the once green brakes now brown and orange in hue.

The willows are yellow—a point of color in the landscape; among them are many alders, with their dark red catkins, that Thoreau held so dear.

Not long ago, on looking out at my window facing eastward toward the sun, I saw the trees in a delicate frost foliage of a cloudy whiteness in the distance, and near at hand the boughs were ropes of silver, flashing forth brilliant diamond sparkles.

On examining this phenomenon an hour later, I found every branch and twig set with flat crystals, disposed at every conceivable angle, and, in whatever view regarded, reflecting the light with dazzling brilliancy.

This strange appearance may have been due to a sudden fall of temperature, this crystal shower with which the air is filled adhering as it touched, the temperature of the trees being gradually affected by the increased cold.

It is not at all remarkable that these winter phenomena of frosts should be in popular fancy attributed to an unnatural agency, for the effect is so artificial, or strikes one as so, in the suddenness of its execution, and in its suggestion of forms achieved in the deliberate

processes of Nature or Art. So the arboreal world seemed in a night to have sprouted into spring foliage, or on nearer observation to have been, by some miracle of Art, silvered and bejewelled.

Every day I am delighted at the appearance of the cranberry bush in the dooryard. Every leaf has left long ago, but the clustering crimson cranberries remain, defying frost and thaw, unwithered, and of as bright a color as when they first ripened in the autumn.

Two geese or loons flying north-northwest, high, in a bee-line to the Mountain. Is a thaw at hand? Have they any notification that the lake will open to receive them?

It was at sunset when I drove up the hill, and suddenly, startled by the sound of sleigh-bells, a large flock of birds left the ground, springing up from the snowy undulations of a pasture, and by the sudden display of white wings I knew them for snow buntings. They flew vigorously, some fluttering, dropping down the air, and dashing on again like flakes on a wild northwest wind, precipitated southward.

The moon is well named Diana—of so cold and impassive a countenance. The stars seem to express much more: they twinkle with a *friendly* brightness.

I learn that it was twelve degrees this morning in the village.

The geese were no geese in respect of their wisdom—they were well informed: a soft south wind, rain, and thawing follow on their flight.

The thaw has a purple-blue sky, and a glassiness and somewhat yellowish tint on the face of the snow.

No blue jays. To exemplify the rarity of birds just now, I may mention that my horse shied at a chickadee that darted down from a barn roof abutting on the side of the road.

A sudden change to extreme cold. Last night the south wind made a great deal of noise in the trees outside of my window and under the eaves, but it did not seem, after all, to be blowing very hard. The air was soft, and not cold. The rain pattered on the glass. The moonlight that filtered through the clouds, by reflection from the melting snow, gave considerable brightness to the night. There were light suggestive noises in and out of doors.

A note for clear days: Smoke in a winter landscape, against the earth, blue; against the sky, purple.

Windless, still, absolutely clear.

The transitions in color on the even surface of the snow being sharper, more sudden, than such variations in summer, or at any other time of year, give the impression of an unusual amount of color in a winter landscape; the distance is more complex than at other seasons. Shadows thrown from the belts of purple woodland are a clear light blue; where the wind has packed the snow to form a crust, the surface presents a purple or pinkish shade; the drifting surface snow is a yellow-white near at hand, in the distance threading the blue or purple fields with lines of golden pink.

How colorless are these winter skies! It is only by looking at the very apex of the sky that you are fully convinced of its blueness. The mountains bathe in a cold glory. It falls upon them breathlessly cold. They are frozen, as completely tranced in it as the sapless trees.

The horizon sparkles in a flood of sunshine, cold, cold as the streamers of the northern lights.

EXTRACTS FROM NOTE-BOOKS
1887–1888

THE SOUTH

THOMASVILLE, GEORGIA,
March.

THE trains loiter in as leisurely a fashion as in Vermont. Since from Wilmington, North Carolina, the country has undergone no change in general characteristics—the inevitable pine, the clearing half cleared, with blackened stumps protruding at short intervals; the wretched negro hovels, in so many cases no better than the Irish shanties of the vacant upper part of New York, often in appearance of as evil a construction as the outbuildings, which for the most part seem to consist of a chicken-house, etc.; the glassless windows, wooden shutters being the substitute; the mud chimneys; the enclosure of rail fences. Peach trees, with their soft rose-colored blossoms, alone give any touch of comfort to the dismal scenery.

The atmosphere was hazy with the continual burning for clearings, which goes on day and night. In many places, where the pertinacity with which the pines have held their ground has triumphed over the feeble enemy, the trunks stand blackened; the method seems to be to kindle a fire and trust that a clearing may be effected. The pines, growing densely, branch meagrely even at the summit. Many of them are marked—the wide open

scar cut with a hatchet. This cutting is made at various heights from about eight feet down to two. Is this the turpentine tapping, or is it preparatory to burning out the trunk for clearing?

The land along the route seemed inhabited almost exclusively by negroes. After Charlestown there was an average of about two white men to every station, Saturday evening at that. In South Carolina, a little distance north of Florence, whenever the train came to a standstill—it is hardly accurate to say "arrived at a station"—troops of little negroes assailed those who stood upon the platform, with entreaties to buy the wilted handfuls of flowers they offered for sale. Among these, a half-grown, hulking, dull specimen had added to his ragged apparel something novel in the shape of an old Confederate uniform coat, the brass buttons all intact. These boys swarmed and struggled for the pennies thrown them, hung upon the steps as the car started, and dropped away one by one like a swarm of bees, always loud and for the most part mirthful.

Here at Thomasville they look to me a good shade darker than along by Charlestown. There was a mingling and a wide variation of types, but withal in general an element of red observable, a decided flesh tint—how local this expression appears here! Sometimes there was a certain suggestion of the Arab rather than the negro, but the combination of Caucasian feature and light coloring is rare. The race characteristics generally assert themselves either in form or color.

Sunrise seen from back of train along the track. The swamps on either hand, pines, and brooding buzzards.

Walk in pines; some of great height, crowned by a comparatively insignificant tangle of branches, so wiry and contorted! They are to the character and direction of ordinary branches (those of deciduous trees and most evergreens that I know) as the antennæ of Orthoptera are to the antennæ of Coleoptera.

These are loblolly pines—a few yellow said to be intermixed. Down the glimpses on either hand, but mostly where it lies lower on the edge of a marshy bit, the lateral white bloom of the dogwood shows. In these gloomy recesses of the wood the moss hangs from the boughs of the pines and oaks, and the smooth white trunks and heavy, dark, large-leaved, glassy foliage of the magnolias offers a variety to the eye, weary with the endless stretches of vertical trunks.

The odor of the pines met us like a welcome on the threshold of the wood—sweet! There was a steady breeze from the north.

Came suddenly upon an old friend among many aliens—a beech; the leaves small, tenderly green; the trunk lichen-stained. Of the unfamiliar trees the holly is far the most amusing, one vine-hung, with the crisp, sharp-edged, glassy, green leaves starting through the dry netted twigs of the seemingly dead vine. The tree about eleven feet high; the trunk gray, straight, like the trunk of a young forest maple growing under conditions of damp and shadow.

At half past four this morning there was a great piping utterance of birds. Trills, harsher low notes, and a floating, thin, melodious cry—mockingbirds perhaps.

I saw them a-plenty yesterday toward evening, silently flitting from tree to tree, showing the white in wings and tail.

The mockingbird's true note, is it not a note in the higher scale of Pan's pipe, the veritable whistle of a reed instrument? A thin flute-like utterance?

Spring is a rejuvenator everywhere, and works the same jugglery in these sombre swamps. There is the background, or rather setting (in the theatrical sense of the word), of a strong, a Southern decadence.

Toward hotel through the dreary village, where above in the hot sky the ragged buzzards sailed lazily. This morning the court house was opened by a loud crying on the porch—an official singsong, apparently. Saw a large man in a light gray suit, to whom several negroes touched their hats, and whom I guessed to be the judge.

The pines everywhere. In a swampy bit, among blackened trunks and charred stumps, the most beautiful crocuses, so delicately white-stemmed, as large almost as tulips.

Beautiful sunset, the sun as usual sinking a fiery disk. Soft little clouds, thin wreaths and diminutive shoals (a sky like the sandy shallow of a brook) all drawn obliquely to the point of disappearance. Beautiful starlight.

The upper branches of a little holly tree seen to-day were in new and tenderly green leaf, from the extremity of the twigs.

After tea we watched the children dancing in the parlor of the Piney Woods Hotel. One little girl, whose short curling brown hair, straight profile, strong chin, long hands and feet, suggested the earlier Italian type (the mediæval) transmitted. She was a beautiful figure, so gay, so gracious, so tenderly graceful. She moved, or, better, flashed, with such harmonious speed through the dance that it ceased to be a commonplace performance. The entire scene—the hotel ball-room, the little merry figures, the rollicking old-fashioned dance—became poetic in the light of her smiles, her bright side glances, her quick elastic step, the dainty dignity of her first bow to her partner, a very small boy, at the commencement of the lancers.

The loveliness of her mien, her childish abandon, that was always tempered by the refinement of a manifestly delicate nature, breathed a music that would have shamed the unmelodious notes of the band, had it not reclaimed these also with some touch of her magic. This unconscious little magician, waving her fairy wand in the prosaic environment of the Piney Woods—its four walls!

She seemed to have a pretty sense of humor also, as when in the processional figure of the lancers she caught the long locks of the little girl in front of her and pretended to be driving. So clearly a vagrant impulse, so daintily and merrily done, and without offense to the child! They were all smaller than she, and all seemed to feel her gentle influence. She was kind, lively, and withal wise in her management of them. She unconsciously held the gaze of many in the room, without a

touch of restraint or embarrassment. What a sight was this, worth all the eloquence of the greatest modern preacher—a sermon, a poem, a thing to thank God for, a sight to reconcile a cynic! For myself, who am not one, I acknowledge the Creation a success, since this little girl dances the lancers of nights.

This morning I inquired my way of a fine-looking man of the strong lean Southern type. He declared the way I had come to be the only route, but being prompted in a low tone by the negro, an intelligent-looking specimen, who occupied the front seat with him, he directed me to take the road (pointing) "back of Mis' Miller's."

My second inquiry of a like nature was addressed to a wagon-load of darkies, among whom, lazily at full length, a heavy, rather brutal white man was lying—a light-haired, light-eyed, planter-looking individual, who raised himself on his elbow to reply. He was clearly the presiding genius of the group, and lay so slothfully among his black comrades, who were perched here and there where they could find room for themselves, that the whole scene in its sentiment and detail might have occurred before the war.

Rain. Cleared off in the afternoon, and I walked in the direction of the pines. The rain seemed to have done a great deal for the scenery—given it depth, color, mystery, thrown a poetic glamour over it that is foreign to its dry, dusty, every-day aspect.

The mockingbirds sang exquisitely after the rain.

They are prodigal of their song; they almost cheapen it, pouring it out to unappreciative ears, from porch, roof-tree, and gable-end, with such unwearying skill, now soft, now harsh, now loud, now low, liquid and shrill—the most varied song that bird ever gave utterance to. In the pauses of the song of the nearest, the far-away whistling, or, better, piping, of others could be heard.

The tree toads seemed also to lift a voice of delight, low, thrilling with the joy of existence.

By the negro cabins, heard voices and laughter and a kind of chant, a musical singsong like the strange song of the little negro boy heard crossing the clearing out in the woods the evening before yesterday. His was a wild kind of utterance, a succession of long-drawn notes of a certain thrilling quality, that ceased with a melancholy cadence.

Sunset, a breaking away of clouds in the west, delicate fleecy points touched with gold, and later the crescent moon clear and palely suggesting the full, and the evening star extraordinarily bright. The moon hangs with the horns upward, almost on a level—is this due to our geographical position? A clear night; at half past eight all traces of the clouds had disappeared, and an hour later there was a film over all, with only a pale gleam, like the memory of hidden stars. A wind stirred in the pear trees, rustling the thick foliage.

Walk at five o'clock. Blue jays flashing like blue flame through the dark foliage of cedars. Returning, the air cold, a strong wind from the west, a fading sun-

set, and the crescent moon faint upon it. March re-asserting itself.

April.

Painting this morning among pitch pines—a great relief to be rid, if it is only temporarily, of the loblolly variety. This is a tree I admit I do not like; there is something snake-like in the writhing direction of its branches, to which the scaly bark gives a peculiar significance. The color of the bark is crude also, and the long tassels catch the sky light with a peculiar glassiness.

The trunks and branches of the Chinese umbrella trees along the lanes are very interesting; they carry a straight line almost to the limit of grace. The trunks, purplish in color, are grained like a willow. They start abruptly from the soil without divergent roots visible—in this also like a willow.

A warm day. Walk in the afternoon about five. Slight wind from southeast. Through pine woods, out on the open road to the woody walk of March 30th. Five o'clock in the afternoon is certainly the poetic hour of the day.

Turning into the wood, where it is dusky, pass by dogwood, sweet gum, maple (soft), all in bloom—that is to say, in comparative maturity of leaf; the sweet gum at a distance strongly suggesting rock maple.

A tender sky—I sometimes think the skies are of a more delicate tint in April. The air soft as summer, none of the rawness of spring, as indeed at no time, even when we first arrived in the middle of March, have we

felt the discomfort of the wet raw air of a Northern April.

It suddenly occurs to me to make a pilgrimage to my beautiful friends, the beeches. Through brush and brier to their locality. There they stand, environed by magnolias and pitch pines, their smooth boles crowned by the feathery spray of vivid green leaves; that dappled fell looks so soft in the faint light that I fancy it must be as velvet to the touch. The magnolias, whose smooth, gray, and lichen-variegated bark I have so often seen with satisfaction and likened to the beech, look cheap by comparison. It maintains its preëminence without any strain of prejudice or imagination. The most beautiful tree in the world—*Fagus americanus.* Old friends in a new habit; for my previous acquaintance has been with the summer-darkened hue of their leaves.

Home by a sandy half-obliterated road, pitch pines (small) on the one hand, tanglewood on the other, the red glow of the sunset ahead.

The light almost faded, and a shadow keeping pace with me that owes its being to the moon, now drawing the wild scattering of mares'-tails that have swept the sky to-day.

Half past eight, wind gone around to west, soft mild moonlit night. Something in the elastic and delicate air —what, I don't know—keeps calling to my mind Herrick's poem, "Night Piece to Julia." There's a tropical suggestion in it, as in so many English poems and poets; Shakespeare, Tennyson, Keats, Shelley, and others had it. Under the surface ice there's a warmth in that national life, strong and tenacious, luxuriant almost, so

widely different from the healthy sterility of America, of Germany too, perhaps even of France; this heat in the blood, this fire of poetry, has burst into flame at times in the history of England.

The foliage very summer-like. The oaks, Spanish, water, filling out solidly; the willows somewhat tardy. On an afternoon, looking away from the sun, down one of the streets, the distance is as blue as indigo, the shadows also, even comparatively near.

I have seen several beautiful beeches. The other day in the wood, a bark like a panther's skin, wrinkled at the joining of the branches.

Night, moon well toward the full, an exquisite soft air. At half past nine very silent; a little tremulous tree toad sound, the distant barking of dogs, no sound of frogs. The sand in the street along the foot-paths white, almost, as snow. Two or three cows walking along the street, and a little white calf that gambols, almost silently, on the sandy roadway. A mistiness over the ground, rising dim against the pines, the stars bright with softened brightness.

Walked under the large magnolia which forms the principal object in my picture, and stood looking up through the leaves, that are wonderfully heavy, leathery. The light penetrates them, and the upward view is through a sun-suffused, opaque green. This looking up from the base of a tree through the leaves at the sky is the most impressive view one can take of them—the variety of color, the cool filtered sunlight caught on the

upper leaf surfaces and transmitted through the thin-veined and delicate plates. Last evening at sunset, standing under the oaks at the edge of the pine wood just after the red glow had partly faded, and as the moon, almost full, hanging too high to be dependent for color on the west, began faintly to indicate the shadows of the trees—looking up at the delicate clusters, darkened by overlying leaves, fading to a faint transparent green at the extremities, the capes, bays, and promontories that bordered on the pale ocean of the sky—to see the leafy continent shaken in the soft breathing of the air, shattered and reuniting and beautiful in all its transitions, was like looking into Dreamland.

The oaks are beautiful; the leaves grow straight to the sun, so flat, and withal so feathery light. Herein maples (soft maples) are disappointing, the broad green leaf seeming to droop upon the stalk. The black gum leaves, starting out in tiny clusters, make me think of butterflies, as if the slender twigs might suddenly take to wing.

At night. Misty moonlight; the moon seemingly larger here than it is North. Heard a mockingbird singing—curious. They sing often on the wing—a short flight. Their song rings all day through the village, and is answered with notes as wild and beautiful from numerous cages hung under piazza roofs and windows, but I have never heard them in the wood.

Out riding to-day; passed through a wild kind of country, by a log cabin (windowless) set in the midst of the clearing. Three beautiful live oaks stood before it. A great hound rushed out at me, snarling and barking,

but was recalled by some one unseen. Passing the same spot later, at about five, a little brown-haired girl sat in the doorway, and in the lighted interior—for the sun, entering at the open door in the rear, shone with a strong white light on the objects within—sat an old woman. The little girl seemed to be reading; a book lay in her lap.

Down in a dusky corner of the clearing a white man and a negro were plowing; they were well in the shadow, for the sun was then on the crown of the pines. The place was indescribably dreary; the trunks of dead trees fifteen feet tall stood close in the plowed soil.

Later passed two white children, who tremulously, with deft, nimble, naked feet, started out of the road, and stood gazing at me with round eyes, like startled woodland creatures.

Dark and dismal turns in the woods; in the many swampy places tall yellow flowers, orchid-like, of a great size; the long afternoon rays searching the wood.

Home—the delicate-tinted sky, dusk, the round forms and various colors of the oaks.

This afternoon out riding. Struck into the wood, along a narrow sandy tract, and came upon a singularly impressive and sombre scene. The brush had evidently been lately burned, for all the tree trunks were blackened. They stood at long intervals, and a green mould rather than grass, a level sward dotted with the great fallen cones, stretched beneath. The trees were large loblolly pines. The twisted and snake-like branches stood out against the clouded sky. No bright gleam of

deciduous foliage lit up the scene; trunk behind trunk, tall, straight as columns, the pines stretched away into apparently endless vistas shut in by the blue of distance and the confusion of this multiplied form—this closing rank of giant trees. The land fell away, and then rose opposite in a long and gentle swell, and the eye could trace a winding way hundreds upon hundreds of yards into the forest, over the even turf. The sun, triumphing over the gathering clouds, cast long shades, straight shadows that met in the gloom of a swampy recess, where the brook, sluggish as are all the streams here, took its course in silence.

Passed several deserted log cabins. Behind one, with a void, black, and gaping door—windows they have none—stood a mournful cedar.

In the wood to-day there was not a solitary bird note, not even the tapping of a woodpecker. There was the kind of resonance, a rumor of thin and airy sound, which in summer seems a ringing in the ears, and likens the circle of the atmosphere, the world, to a shell.

The summer here is more beautiful than the spring, I am inclined to think, owing to the great mingling of evergreens. There is no spontaneity in the laugh of Spring; it rings hollow among the pines.

The other night, passing the church on my way home from the hotel, where I left a tinkling of dance music, I heard the voices of the congregation rising to the long-drawn notes of a hymn. Then, as often before, I felt the force of the poetry in the common fate. There seemed something fine, and severe to asceticism, in the barren

life of the country. The Puritan impulse in my blood rose at the sound.

Listening to this music, I realize for the first time how little I have perceived the lonely and pathetic side of the peasant life, the sad fate that attends the tiller of the soil, the melancholy that gathers like darkness upon the coming night.

I feel no common thrill of joy and sorrow; it is nowhere here. The people are alien, and have made the country strange. Would to God that I were back in New England!

Beautiful, soft, hanging, floating, and mackerel cloud; sky faintly purple on horizon.

The other morning these oaks, now so full and beautiful, stretched cool shadows across the white road.

There is rain in the air. A temperate, almost sultry pause. A buzzard wheeling heavily.

This looking up at the leaves—a reminder of Fairyland—its fragile texture and vanishing shores.

Two nights ago a bat circling among the pines; they are interesting in their silent habit and their love of the dusk.

Beautiful moonlight. The moon rising large, reddish, behind the pyramidal pear trees and the thin and delicate branches of a little oak.

Walk at night (Saturday) along the Broad Street, among the tatterdemalion throng of negroes coming in

from the country for supplies. Last night the dancing, surging negroes, the banjo and the cello, the parti-colored costumes and the guffawing crowd.

The light greens of April under the dark blue, brooding, cloudy sky, crossed with lighter white blown fragments.

Beautiful sunny blue morning, with light floating fleecy clouds.

Last night no mist, clear, with stars overpowered, and some hanging low, pointing strange geometrical figures like the hieroglyphics of the mystical Chaldean lore. The low points of light, that seem to connect and bring near to the earth the close tangle of the light above, topping the dense dark masses of trees.

On the way from Camden to Columbia we travelled under a lowering and melancholy sky, and leaving behind us the dreary, dry, open wastes of sand, the level barrens of oak and pine, we came into a wild and dreadful region, a "desert inaccessible, under the shade of melancholy boughs."

A dense cane-brake clogged the depths of the forest; it rose to the height of six or seven feet, and intertwined among the stalks, and hanging on the meeting heads, were leafy vines. Young trees started up in the midst of the tangle, and the whole formed an impenetrable thicket. Dark pools showed in among the brake, and winding through the dismal forest were sluggish brown canals in which rotting trunks were visible, their mud-coated

slimy bulk thrust as alligators, or some other swamp denizen, half out of water.

Sweet and black gum, post oaks, live oaks, and cypress were conspicuous among the trees; they rose to a gloomy height, and thrust their haggard branches, gnarled and moss-hung, against the cold dark sky.

Sometimes the bulk of foliage, the tangle of vines, was a barrier to the eye; sometimes vistas opened to a depth of heavier gloom. Such is a Southern swamp.

From Spartanburg to Asheville. Almost on the boundary of North Carolina the mountains sprung up, blue, indistinct—the air full of smoke. As the train passed through the thick woody tangle, tiny fires, kindled probably from the sparks and burning fragments from the engine, were wavering in the strong southwest wind. Sometimes we passed by larger fires, seemingly attempts at clearing—charred and red smouldering logs, and here and there a bright burst of flames.

In the cuttings through which we passed—the walls clay and brown, earth-stained, slaty rock—the air seemed damp like the air of a grotto. The road ran partly on trestlework and high embankments shelving precipitously from the ends of the sleepers; once with a dark lily-mottled pond below, down some forty feet. Streams on the mountain-sides, dashing over the brown rocks. The pines that show here and there among the still naked deciduous trees (oaks mostly) seem to express the poetic conception of the tree—to stand, dark and wild, striking root with adventurous courage, on barren and inaccessible places.

The houses are very few, log cabins with the outside mud chimney, sometimes clapboard buildings. Here a house seems a settlement; three afford a sufficient apology for stopping, the third often being the unpainted, rough, barn-like little station, with its platform in front, close upon the track, the only architectural feature that could in any way indicate the peculiar nature of its usefulness. The track twists and turns, and seems to writhe its way into the mountains; from the platform behind the baggage car I can see the leaning wheels and the working piston as the engine sweeps some sudden curve, and, following the direction of the track, I can see the rails vanish into the hillside.

Oaks and, I think, tulip trees seem to be the largest growth. Before reaching Hendersonville dogwood was common, the white blossoms shining in the woods while as yet the leaf-buds were hardly out. Some small oaks retain their last year's leaves, but vegetation seems little advanced, though it is now almost the middle of April. It is about what one would expect in March. Scaly buds, etc.; the apple trees, some gnarled old specimens straggling along the route, were in blossom. Wild honeysuckles here and there showed prettily, and there was sometimes dense undergrowth, a small shrub-like laurel with longer (I think oblong) descending, seemingly digitate leaves.

The sides of the hills unsheltered by the trees were grayish or slightly colored by the mould of dead leaves. Some of these brown skeletons (narrow and cut oak) danced with a rustling sound in the windy wake.

The sun set round and red in the heavy air. It

glowed behind the thin fringe of deciduous trees on the mountain shoulders, and again, at a turn of the track, would swing out and hang between the diverging hills. It set several times that day, and finally, when it had quite disappeared, a faint pink flush suffused the western sky.

Fastened to the last car was a truck on which sat two mountaineers and a negro. The two former, stolid, apathetic, with a rustic bearing, something more than country awkwardness, that was the slow, meaning, powerful attitude that is a kind of grace and is an attribute of the peasant. They were of the evil, strong, picturesque animal, such as one never sees in the North. They represented the European peasant, and redeemed the likeness with a saving kind of wildness. The features of both were well moulded rather than cut; long thin faces, rather long noses, eyes small, close, giving them a furtive, watchful, rather than contemplative expression—the look of a wild animal—thin lips and small chins, thoroughly American. Both sat with their hats drawn over their eyes.

They never spoke to one another, they never even smiled; they let their eyes wander, and occasionally turned their heads from side to side, but otherwise they were still as wooden images. This was the more remarkable in the negro, whose pose, though it seemed restful in the quietude he maintained, was a little constrained. He sat with his right leg extended, his left crossed over it at a right angle with the knee, supporting himself in an upright position by his right arm a little bent, the palm extended flat upon the floor of the truck.

Around his thick swarthy wrist was a narrow black band like a strip of court-plaster, possibly a charm.

Another man, somewhat better dressed though less picturesquely, a bearded fine figure with a rather intelligent face, a foreman evidently, was standing on the back platform. Arriving at the station, this one got off the train, and the negro uncoupled the truck. They ran it back a few yards, threw the shovels, etc., hastily upon the ground, and finally lifted the truck bodily off the rails. They were interesting to watch, so silent and so handy at their work.

In the course of the run, passing through the narrow and sometimes steep cuttings, the dense black smoke from the engine would pour down and hang in the opening, so that as we left it we seemed to have escaped from the infernal regions. The smoke cloud would fall with the blackness of a thunder-storm, and on several occasions threatened to envelop the little truck; at which the two drew their hats further over their eyes, but otherwise sat unmoved.

The twilight was cold, the evening cheerless on account of the gray smoky sky. Far away on either hand, at a break in the hills, one could catch glimpses of further mountains, ghostly thin.

There was a sweet smell from the earth. While in the train I could hear a shrill whistling kind of note that I took for a frog's, and later (at night) when we stopped they were piping loud. A weird sound, almost like the note of a bird, it was impossible to locate. The stars shone very dim.

Far down in the narrow valleys were some log cabins.

Could these cuttings be the "coves" of Miss Murfree's Tennessee mountains?

Asheville, North Carolina,
April.

Mountains rising on all hands, with a crowning fringe of thin, leafless, deciduous stems, and pines. Air cool, soft, very thick—smoke?

The red clay in a measure destroying the poetic significance of the distant, far-stretching, and vanishing roads.

A view (of a kind) from the hotel, but to us who have so long pined on the Georgia levels, it opened with a wide and pleasant effect. The sight of the mountains put us at home.

Strong west wind; beautiful effect of breaking clouds over Pisgah and westward toward Tennessee.

Old farmhouse on the bank of the Swannanoa, with one chimney matted with ivy stems carrying the leaves to the very top. This is the first real glimpse of farms and civilization that I have had as yet. It is delightful in that it makes me think of home.

Road winding up the mountain-side; distance blue, nearer hills purple, so soft with their clothing of deciduous trees—like the withered goldenrods' stems in a November field.

Chestnuts, red and white oaks, black birch, dogwood, yellow and Table Mountain(?) pines, and occasionally the beautiful, dark, gleaming, feathery foliage of the white pines. The oaks are magnificent—their rugged

boughs, growing gnarled and misdirected, having a symmetry of strength; they are imposing. Everywhere, more especially in the wood, grow mountain laurel and rhododendron.

The mountains to the north are the Rugged, Craggy, and Black ranges.

The wind was blowing strong at sunset. Clouds, aping the mountain shapes and extending the ranges indefinitely, growing heavy and towering in the southwest, caught the light. The sun sank round and red, and a hot glow, as bright as blood, burned for a little behind the western mountains.

Hot Springs, North Carolina,
April.

At night, the rush of the river.

Thunder-storm about half past four—hail, and a driving wind that blew white storm-wraiths through the rain. Clear again at five, the heavy mass of clouds lifting like a curtain and disclosing the blue sky and sparkling hilltops westward.

Swallows flew along the surface of the river; the opposite bank was alive with bird notes. A pleasant sound from the dripping rocks. The sun obscured; the scattered clouds, fragments again concentrating in the west; the east clear and blue. The creek brawling hoarsely.

On the way home, passed by some evergreens—some cedars or junipers, whose foliage held the tiny raindrops, sparkling amid the boughs like a beautiful iridescent fruit, crystalline berries.

Clear windy morning. Wandered over to the little island. Under the yellow pines; the forget-me-nots starring their mossy cushions—on such delicate fairy stems, tremulously erect, growing so close in little oval patches, like pools that mirror a delicate blue, an April sky. White and blue violets growing rank as daisies; exquisite purple flowers, larkspur and ice-moss.

On visiting this spot before, the afternoon sun was from time to time hidden in the clouds, so that there was a beautiful play of light and shade on the moss.

Further on, at the edge of the shadow, where the road gave out upon a bright sandy stretch sloping to the river, the pines were replaced by a growth of young hemlocks, under whose dark foliage the shade took on a cooler suggestion. Of all evergreens, not excepting even my friends the white pines, these appeal to me the most, with their beautiful, graceful, and delicate branches tapering to such fragile twigs—so smooth and light-hued in saplings—their bright yet sombre foliage, their delicate tiny cones. The poetic habiliment of the pine is theirs by right.

Two old trees, a sweet gum and a sycamore, share the guardianship of the little beach. Opposite, the rocky bank rises precipitously; the river sweeps in an arc, of which the beach is the centre, coming tumbling, yellow and turbulent, from the east, and sweeping westward under the rugged wall.

May.

Ride toward Paint Rock; windy morning, but a burning summer heat out of the wind. Trees well out—red

oaks, black birches, buckeye, chestnut. Saw several interesting birds—a cardinal, flashing like flame in the dark boughs of a cedar; though the simile is worn, the wonderful brilliance of the bird plumage gave life to it. Alders line the river—a natural hedge.

Several snakes lying dead in the road. Is it Longfellow, in "Miles Standish," who likens an Indian to a snake? The comparison seems very fit; the strange and varied markings of the skins suggest a fashion of warpaint, for a snake is sinister in every habit of life—its comings and goings seem to be directed along the warpath.

Terribly hot in the morning; a beautiful, mysterious summer night.

The suggestiveness of summer!—a word that is so weighted with the fullness of existence—means more to me than any other word in the language, I think.

A strong wind from the east; near Paint Rock the baying of hounds, deep, bell-like, with a full, prolonged, and startling cry.

Home, facing the wind. A cold and shrouded sunset, the moon riding high, slightly tinged.

The butterflies gather and hover on this road, circling and whirling like a dance of the fairies, the volatiles!

Cloudy afternoon, rain about half past three. The road beautiful, crossed by light and shadow, the foliage almost summer-like. A beech exquisitely illumined; the boughs light transparent green in the shade, fairly glit-

tering with a white metallic sparkle in the sunshine. The moss-stained face of the gray rock, over which trickles the oozing of some tiny spring. A strong wind and a threat of rain bring me home at the double quick.

A rainy outlook; heavy, moist clouds stretching gray across the sky, lifting low above the western horizon to admit a pale yellow strip of light.

Crossing the ferry, I heard the thin elastic cry of the nighthawks and saw them whirling high above.

Note the beauty of parallel lines, in the trunk of a tree, in branches—the charm of bare and simple facts.

The devil's darning-needles that flew across my path appeared more like the handiwork of a miraculously skilful jeweller than Nature's production, so glistening, so unreal.

Rather damp evening, misty. On the ride home the wall-like hill from which the river seems to spring was blank, desolately void in the obliterating mist. The island is in full leaf, the trees round and green, of wonderful variety of shade and form.

Yesterday, out riding, saw another dragon-fly, whose wings were bronze-gold. The body was of the color and iridescent glow of opaque glass, such as one sees often in the stem of a goblet of Venetian ware. If it is true that insects take their color and general appearance from their surroundings, dragon-flies would seem to be relics of the ages of brass and iron. Among such scenes they might have winged a less startling flight.

Beautiful moonlight; moon almost on the full, I think. The air, cleared by the rain, is crystalline.

The hills that rim this basin are clearly defined, sharp, just under the moon, where a pyramidal pine-crowned hill rises against the sky. In the clefts and gorges the white mist-wreaths are gathering; to the north a cloud rests on the mountains. High, high above, almost in the apex of the arch, swings the Dipper, and lower, pale but steadfast, trembles the Northern Star. The planets shine with a deep and splendid radiance; low in the west, one, wonderfully luminous, flashes through the branches of a locust.

My shadow lies as black and clear as if thrown by some brilliant artificial light. A slight and cool wind is stirring; it gently waves the branches of the trees. Further to the west the line of the ridge is a little blurred. The moon seeks out the masses of foliage, and wraps the hills in an added shade of mystery. The eye, turned away from the source of light, finds the scene gradually growing, the details shaping out of the void. There is a continuous and strange iteration. Can it be the cry of a whippoorwill that comes up from the river?

Listen to the negroes singing. How they love a slow and melancholy cadence! Their songs were well sung, and fell sweetly on the wilder far-off murmurs of the night—the weird complaining of whippoorwills, the shrilling of frogs, and the strong continuous rush of the river.

On the beach the old sycamore has drawn an enchanted circle of shade about his whitened trunk. The

leaves catch the sky lights less glassily than the foliage of other trees; the upper surfaces are often of a very perceptible blue; they seem rather to absorb the color than to reflect the light.

I had intended making my walk a short one, but the charm of the place led me. Any summer afternoon will suffice to elucidate the myths of the wood spirits—alluring fairies, will-o'-the-wisps—the dumb welcome, the detaining of invisible hands, the enticing of soundless voices. When one has once become a familiar of the woodland greens, one has in a measure lost the power to refuse; every waving leaf and grass blade seems to beckon—all the senses are under the spell, and conspire to lead one astray.

Reëntering the wood was like stepping into the dim interior of a cathedral. The place was solemn; the sun had gone under a cloud, and the light came sadly in.

A pale sunset, seen from my window. High above I see the nighthawks, the size of gnats, yet their cry is distinct. The air is full of bird notes, and far away a clear silvery sound that startles me with its likeness to the music of a wood thrush.

To-day in the wood, out riding, saw a crested cardinal dart through the foliage. It is by observation of the ornamental in nature that one can arrive at some reason in the Indian methods.

I walked this morning about half past nine o'clock along the near river bank southeastward. Followed the same sandy way that was my first pedestrian venture on

my arrival. What a change has been accomplished in a little more than two weeks! The road, then open, is now shut in by a growth of summer verdure; the air is heavy with a summer fragrance. The bright sunlit boles of the beeches are now dim in the shadow recesses of their own foliage. The young sycamores along the way, starting up out of the sand, are now perhaps the most interesting of all surrounding trees. Every leaf has a particular interest, some individual charm; between those through which the light penetrates and those reflecting it there is a marked contrast of color. I retract anything I may have said hitherto in dispraise of them.

The holly trees are putting out fresh sprouts, tenderly green. At the grove of birches and alders, where formerly a bank of violets showed purple in the shadow, I find some few remaining, hid under the leaves. Further on, I rest under a hemlock, the branches tipped with a bright crown of new yellow-green leaves. The little cones hang prettily on the under side of the branches.

There is no delight so intense, I think, unless it is the hearing of music, as this of looking the day in the face and basking in its smile. All nature seems to jump with my mood. An impulse animates me, as strong perhaps, though the direct reverse, as that which caused Christian to shut out the voices of his wife and children and hurry away, crying out, "Life! Life! Eternal life!"

VERMONT

STOWE, VERMONT,
June.

SAW to-day in the meadows bobolinks and bluebirds, also woodpeckers. Yesterday a thrush, singing on the boughs of a little aspen. Numerous little barn swallows, often seen on fence rails and ridge-pole of barns, displaying their buckskin vests.

I could duplicate my last year's notes. Last night the moon set about half past eleven; at ten it was descending toward the barn. The air was warm and sweet with the smell of hay that was gathered in little hummocks, arranged with rectangular precision, and each haycock casting its little arc of shadow. A softly lighted, odor-breathing night.

The other day, speaking of the hermit thrush's song, so far differing from the bobolink's in the spirit of its utterance that, while both are without effort, one is the unconscious, uncounted, and prodigal scatterings of a blithe heart; the other seems conscious of the unutterable sweetness of his song, and although the utterance of its notes is as easy as the flow of water, they are heard only at intervals. Yet he is no niggard, but a constant singer ringing his changes when the fount of aërial song is dry at noon. He is less heedless; it seems as if he must par-

take somewhat of the deep joy that falls upon his listener; his pauses thus seem breathless—he is rapt in the delight and wonder of his strange power of song. Who has not heard him, in many successive efforts, pitching his voice high and low, striving to strike again the thrilling note that still lingers in one's ears? His are jewels of song that cannot be squandered lightly, whether he would or no. There is here no jingle of current coin, but each note falls with the weight of precious metal.

A quality that adds to its especial charm is that it is so strong and searching a note that one is at once able to locate it. It is not scattered in the air like the song of most birds, but is confined to stricter limits than some quarter of the horizon.

Standing in my mossy road, I hear it chiming in the wood; in the open field I can even locate it, tracing it to a certain tree. Though not as vague as other bird notes, it loses nothing of its mysterious charm; it becomes more suggestive, and leads the thought a sylvan dance.

July.

A little brown squirrel seen on the trunk of a black walnut, chirping, sneezing, and darting—a creature of electric impulse. A pretty fellow this, that jerks himself down to within easy reach of me, and then whirls up the tree again with a whistling exclamation.

A young chipmunk crosses the road, and I afterward discover it in the fork of a great maple. It is pretty, less wild and flighty, with a more innocent expression, as becomes its years. With its plump striped body, its high narrow head, and the little markings of white above its

eyes, it has the look of a Lilliputian semi-wild pig, such as one sees South—of a guinea pig really, I suppose. It remained perfectly still watching me for some moments, and then at a sudden movement scampered up the tree and disappeared. At that moment, down the woody slope on the bole of towering basswood, I saw a woodpecker, black, marked with white, circling about the trunk, hopping stiffly with thin shanks stretched wide apart, like a witch around a cauldron. There is something impish in the manner of these birds.

Further on, a rocky mossy pasture, with glades surrounded by a growth of old maples, basswood, ash, beech. Onward through the old road, afterward sitting on the fallen log, listening to the hermit thrush.

A deep wooded road with ferns and mosses, large forest trees.

The leaf descending with the swaying motion of a butterfly.

Clouds have been gathering in the south all the evening, now advancing on the moon, that, vainly striving, at length is lost and muffled in the towering vapors.

Earlier, on a pale blue sky, she shone fair-faced and mellow in the reflected sunset, haloed in the melting of the lighter clouds—forerunners of this gathering tempest, this mounting darkness that holds above us the threat of fire and water, that lowers, peals, and flashes. This is sheet lightning, that gleams steely bright, leaping along the southern horizon behind the dark rack, and blinds the struggling moon. Once she rolls out, round and glorious, to the eye of the wistful

world, and again is lapped and lost in darkness. The head of the great thunder-cloud, pushing to the very apex of the heavens and encompassing the dim stars one by one, is a vast cone, its broken ridge silvered by the imprisoned moonbeams.

Northward, paler than the dwindling moonshine behind the church spire, seeming to mock its form with a ghostly challenge, spear after spear darts up among the stars. What a silent play of seraph swords! Rising and falling so swiftly, so mysteriously, now in far-reaching and isolated rays, now in a widening horizontal wave, the northern lights dispute the night with the storm.

The lightning flashes bright along the spire—for an instant reconstructs the scene. The columns of the church gleam white before me; above the glistening steeple the sky is blue, full of white clouds. The trees stand green; the road, the hills, the houses, for one brief and brilliant moment are released from the black thraldom of the night. Following slowly on the flashes, a deep and sullen rumble crosses the sky.

Windy night, wind southwest; moon rising behind a thin veil of clouds; air temperate, soft, a rustling wind. Moon on the summit of a strange dense pyramidal cloud-form just appearing above the hill. The moon rides to the south, and the cloud is swept northward. The voice of the wind has the hollow rushing that is heard in an empty shell. The upper sky is clear and starlit.

The other day, whitening of the trees in the wind—willows, a white tossing sea. The lilac under side of

alder, apple, and raspberry leaves. The white gleaming of the soft maples; the aspens like the trembling of moonlight on water; and all the surging sounds. The wind crying around a hillside.

Last night, evening pleasant, cool; bat flying on silent though fluttering wings, passing into the shadow of the trees, and then out again against the light. The hills sharp against the amber sky. Something in the air—a coolness—that suggests a coming storm. Venus beautiful and wonderfully large.

Wind rising at half past eight, at ten blowing hard. No wild and dying voices, but a great commotion and rustling among the trees; a bell, a deep and stirring sound along the wind.

In the high pasture. An old dead tree—rock maple; looking through its branches off toward the hills of Sterling. How it covers miles of country! The naked bony finger-tips stretch till they touch the woods on the east; a mass of leaves, some dead and coppery, hide the looming face of Mansfield; a hanging branch shows white against the tree-tops in the valley; black shadows in the elbows of the boughs, etc.; rustling leaves. Wintry suggestion in the air.

Moss Glen Falls. Start at about half past six, July 31st. Sun already set. A strong red-golden light behind the hills. Reached Falls when the sunset had burned from yellow to red, the dusky red of a dwindling fire.

Standing upon the acclivity that commands the first

view of the Falls, we felt cold upon our faces the wind out of the gorge, and the leaves of the little shrubs of maple shivered and fluttered with the fearful joy that the wildness of the place inspires. Pale, on the apex of the cutting, between the boughs of hemlock the wide disk of the moon appeared. Higher up, in the evergreen wood, she seemed to peer from among the tree trunks, rising as one advanced slowly up the ascent step by step, as if striving to detect what intruder lurked in the gloom of her demesne. Westward, the stream beyond the saw-mill, so far below us, reflected the pallor of the sky, and lay a gleaming serpentine track in the shadowy valley. Spider webs spun across the path swept the face with a faint tingling, like the contact of some subtile quality in the air—some mesmeric touch of ghostly fingers.

Out of the black abyss the tireless voice of the water rose to our straining ears. To the soughing of the wind, to the rustling of the trees, to music, to the sound of human voices—raised in sorrow or in laughter—running water is never out of tune.

Our feet were noiseless on the mould. An instinct led us along the path that at one point descended into a little hollow below the overhanging trunk of a fallen hemlock. We were come to the edge of the wood; the path had given out upon a grass-grown road. We saw the moon above the mountains. A little lozenge-shaped plateau lay before us, the lower point a watery triangle—the large upper dam. Its far extremity was shrunk to a hollow between the hills, in the misty depths of which the gray roof of a dilapidated barn shone in the pale light.

The tarn lay deathly calm, and down in the depths was the picture of the mountains and the moon. Tiny ripples from time to time broke the perfect oval of the moon's reflection. The night was cool; the air was almost imperceptible, but the leaves of an aspen on the margin danced and shivered.

It was eight o'clock. Bullfrogs stationed at various points along the shore, like drowsy sentinels, from time to time passed a hoarse and guttural watchword.

The water seemed high, and lost a definite margin in the rushes and tall grasses of the meadow. On the further shore, to the right, some dead trees, white birches, displayed the slender twigs of their topmost branches against the sky. A bat fluttered across the moonlight. We stood by the log dam and looked down into the black and cavernous depth of the water-worn gorge. Far below in the shadow the foam of the torrent shone a misty white.

The ride home. Up through the dense shadows of the road, where the moonbeams shone on the trunks of the birches. Here and there in the wood they gleamed with a pale phosphorescent fire. Up high on the slope of the Hogback one came into more intimate terms with the moon and the stars. By lighted farmhouses, where the inmates might be seen through the unshuttered windows. The baying of house-dogs. The lonely road—across the fields in the white moonshine, and again plunging into the seemingly absolute darkness of the wooded hollows. Trailing wreaths of clematis on bush and rotten log. The dark and lonely house. The open pasture, with the ill-defined and grassy track winding

by brake and boulder—a wide space with the scattered gleam of stone. Far away westward the mountains rose vast and dim.

Last night at ten o'clock, the crescent moon, just before setting, shone bright in the sky. The frogs were loud, and in this muttering bass string accompaniment and the thin long call of the locusts the frosty piping of a cricket trilled in the cold moonshine. It has a kind of sadness, as a sound of the latter end of summer, but is, in association as in quality, a cheering friendly music.

The night was cold. This morning crisp and autumnal—the cricket note was prophetic. At half past six small mists fading on the hillsides. Cobwebs, like the broken bits of Hans Andersen's Magic Mirror, lying scattered in the grass—a heavy dew-wet grass. It seems, later, when this white spangling has disappeared, that the cobwebs were of so ethereal a quality as to have been absorbed alike with the dew.

This afternoon a ride. Oh, the beauty of these damp woods—ferns and leafy underbrush!

August.

Last night dense clouds that seemed pierced and edged, instinct with a phosphorescent light—the hidden moon. There was a raving wind with an angry stifled crying, its voice in a keyhole breathing with a deep and terrible utterance, the low forbidding mutter of an angry bull. Its lost and lonely wailing on the distant hillsides—the rush of its coming, the howl of its baffled rage. It growled, mingling the noise with a hoarse and labored

breathing, like some giant watch-dog. But most interesting of all, mingled with its changing asthmatic voices, is the awed and changeless utterance of the trees.

The cold spell. Yesterday afternoon I rode with H. through the woody stretch on the road toward Elmore, by great hemlocks and graceful saplings of moosewood. There I let my eyes feast upon the familiar and beautiful sight of lighted spray and tree trunk.

Does not the mossy bole of the beech hold as much of that oblique illumination as the silver columns of the birches reflect? The other night, when the moonbeams penetrated the wood in this fashion, perhaps the beeches contributed to the phosphorescent glow that I concluded was due solely to the birches.

At the further extremity of this wood we stopped our horses to listen to the exquisite song of the thrushes —two hermit thrushes, I think, answering one another from hidden places in the leafy realm above. As we emerged upon the open and looked back at the mountains, we saw a dark congregation of clouds crowded over the summit of Mansfield, and through them distinct and widening rays of light descending far into the valley. The wind began blowing cold from the northwest. A magnificent sunset: cumulus clouds floated in all directions, and, stretched along the ridge of the sky, like a daylight manifestation of the Milky Way, was the variation of cloud-forms that constitute a mackerel sky—a shoal of celestial silver fish.

For the first time this summer we heard tree toads—a familiar, sweet, but sorrowful sound. It gives voice to

the vague regret that mourns over the wasting light of every day that brings the summer nearer to its end.

This morning the wind is from the north, cold as if it blew straight from ice of Hudson Bay. The Great Stone Face is hidden in a white wreath of cloud; a snowy mass crowns the dark woody height of Sterling.

Thank Heaven, our outlook is still northward! The Hogback closes in on the southeast, and makes an impenetrable mystery of that region; far to the south the cloud-mountain [Camel's Hump] marks the limit, and rises as a rest and conjectural point for the eye. Mansfield shuts out the west like a wall, but the long slopes of Sterling and the straight horizon eastward of its final pyramidal crest give scope to fancy and the play of the imagination.

The rock maples on the side of the street are rustling in the wind. I fancy these rugged old trees feel a great joy in the vital quality of this air. They seem to have awakened from the slumber induced by the soft southwestern winds and the long warm days of the past summer, and to be moving their limbs and drawing great breaths of this their native air. The rustling of their leaves seems to speak with clear and living tones, no longer a drowsy murmur.

The thermometer stands as low as fifty-seven—this at half past eight. To-day we realize that the sun is a true friend.

Smugglers' Notch. A hot hazy day in the Notch, notwithstanding the air is cool. A logging track, and

further a path leading up, up to the cave. Fording the streams—the wonderful clearness and icy rush of the water. Beeches; birches; mountain, red, and rock maple; tall and graceful saplings of the exquisite enamelled-stemmed and broad-leafed striped maple; ferns, and a matted undergrowth that completely hides the leaf-strewn mould.

So far as I went beyond the road one might easily ride, even at night. The path lay partly along the bed of a dry stream that is clearly a torrent in the spring. Small dams of netted forest-drift lay here and there across the track of the water. The roots of trees along the margin are washed as bare and colorless as bones. Enormous boulders, probably hurled long since into this narrow chasm from the overhanging side of Mansfield, obstruct the path. They are moss-grown, and plumed with ferns; birch saplings have sprung up on their sides. Along the sloping side of one of these great rocks the trunk of a black birch tree, writhing root-like among the ferns, traverses the length of the incline and rises erect upon the apex.

There are black and ragged openings where the rocks lie piled together.

The largest trees are black birches and maples. A coppery gleam pierces the foliage above and shines on the tree trunks. Far off I hear, faint and thin, the call of a thrush. The trees, hoary in their coverings of gray lichens, stand deathly still, scarcely moving a leaf. They look so white and old that their singular quietude seems an habitual attitude of expectation, as if they listened for the rush of the wind, the crash of the falling rock,

or the roar of the flood that should stretch them lifeless on the mould.

The stream takes its rise from a spring, a welling crystal basin hollowed in the slope of the bank—a mossy cradle.

Mount Mansfield. Started at about half past three. The morning was dense with mist and heavy with a canopy of clouds, since cleared away in rain and a strong north-northwestern wind. There was life in the air. Up through the wood at the base, where innumerable saplings of birch, maple, and beech rise, shining gray and serpentine in the lessened light admitted through the boughs of the taller trees. The black birches far outgrow the others. They rise, massive, twisted, and scaly shapes, over the tops of the surrounding trees. Ferns and mosses flourish in the gloom; there also the broad leaves of the striped maple are displayed. Among the mosses and the fallen leaves the little red clusters of the bunch-berries appear.

The spruces are mingled among the deciduous trees, hemlocks also occasionally, but as we near the summit the hemlock disappears altogether. The openings into the wood upon either hand were most beautiful, for there gleamed the birches, and, caressed by the moving sunshine, the blue lichen-stained boles of the beeches stood ankle-deep in the damp green mosses.

Over our heads the wind "with a monarch's voice" swept through the tree-tops—the sonorous trumpets of the North.

Presently a dog appeared in the road before us, and at a turning we came upon a logging party. A team of

oxen stood in a small clearing on the edge of the road; great spruce logs, chained together, lay from axle to axle. Two men, brown, lean, taciturn, clad in jean overalls and cowhide boots, brought the beasts to a standstill and stood by to see us pass. They were hauling logs to Bruce's sawmill at the foot of the Mountain.

As we go higher the air becomes colder. The beeches and maples are all left below, but among the evergreens, to the rocky summit indeed, as high as the trees dare clamber, the hardy birches have taken root.

Now we stand and look down at all Vermont below us. Far away are the faint tops of the White Mountains. To our right Smugglers' Notch, wild and rugged, lay sunk in the cold gloom of a wintry twilight. A dark cloud stretched over Mansfield, but in the west the sun was sinking untroubled. Up on the nose the wind was strong, and as one turned to look into the Champlain valley it passed the ear with a loud tearing noise. The sun sank behind the most northward of the Adirondacks; it gleamed along the waters of Lake Champlain.

To the southwest Venus shone with a watery gleam. The eastern valley was dark in the shadow of this monstrous pile—fifteen miles to the lighted top of Elmore. There was a wild delight in standing on the apex of this narrow wall, seeing the rocky mass of the chin heaved up against the sky like the bows of a ship. The mountain top, to pursue this simile, is like the deck of an ancient galley. Upon either hand the empty ocean of the air. The chin is the towering prow, from which it slopes, a long incline, to the spot where I stand amidships under the high deck of the nose.

The eastern valley is to me, of course, by far the more interesting. The gleaming course of a river that winds among the hills to the lake is a beautiful feature of the western side. The sun sank behind the mountains, that stood out dark and blue against the glow. It is a close brotherhood, that of the Adirondacks—they stand shoulder to shoulder in a fine attitude that seems to typify the nobility and the strength of union.

The weather-worn house and barn had a strange semi-savage interest. The smell of the wood smoke blown from the kitchen chimney was a healthful perfume on the raw air. The wind makes a surging sound among the dwarfed spruces along the plateau. By the path there are marshy spots deep with spongy mosses, where standing pools show cavernous over their bottoms of black mire. There are so-called hedgehogs, porcupines, in this wind-wilted growth. Louis, the cook at the Summit House, says that some have been killed weighing up to fifty pounds.

In the house the low wooden ceilings, the wood-panelled walls, carry out the suggestion of the sea; not less the sound of the wind.

After supper the warm and cosy sitting-room. Louis remarking in the course of conversation, "When I go down to earth."

The night was cold; fitful gleams of starlight in the rift of the clouds. Half past ten, reading Lear. Stage direction: "Storm still continues." Outside, the rush and clamor of the wind.

Next day, the drive down through the clear cold air;

at the hotel about half past nine. The thermometer on the piazza stood at sixty.

Ride at five o'clock. Through the wood where H. and I rode not long ago and listened to the answering thrushes. There, on the spot, at about half past six, a solitary voice, this time calling mournfully out of the deepening twilight. The cold sunset over the cold blue mountains, seen through the tree trunks, hinted sadly of autumn.

On August 14th saw small gray bird, breast of a lighter hue, throat a bright crimson. Lapland redpoll?

Afternoon walk; clearing—distance absolutely clear; houses not so big as the most Lilliputian toy, and the windows plainly discernible.

Wind west-northwest; cold. Wind in the white pines—surf, far and near, the rumor in a shell. Raindrops on all evergreens, particularly on the frosty spruces, that make a wintry sound. This might be a rolling, moderately hilly country, such as the Berkshire, now, with the mountains, with the exception of the dark side of Elmore, hidden in the fog.

It is necessary to see the spruce in these northern latitudes to appreciate how beautiful it is.

The interior of the slaughter-house—dark. The hanging carcasses of a pig and a beef; their colors so strong, like a Dutch picture, a strange sight in the landscape. To-night clouded again, black as a wolf's maw; wind with a coursing hollow sound; rain shaken from the stirring trees—cold.

Start for a ride; a clear morning after the rain. There's life in the air; one feels exhilarated. Though Nature's mood is intangible, one could predict that she will presently be gay. It is like an awakening after the wet drowsy days past, when the sun was withdrawn and the world showed gray and lifeless, days of dead and vacant hours, and restless nights of troubled breathings, nightmare whispers, when she seemed crying in her sleep. Now, with the sunny blue above, one feels that her eyes have opened, her breath comes in calm and gentle respirations. In the semi-consciousness of an awakening she still feels the kisses of the rain; she sighs and smiles—an indolent smile of sweet recollection. The terrors of the night are forgotten.

The wind is from the west. The wood—so many and such various forms of out-of-doors designed to flourish in the damp mist and rains, the summer inclemencies and cold, with the touch of late showers. In such an environment how startling is the thought of the naked dryads—the contrasting of unclothed flesh, so luminous, so soft, so warm, so vital, with the dull and slippery leaves, the rough and unyielding boughs, the cold and lifeless vegetation.

Of Nature's early mood—though so flaccid a state can hardly be defined as such—it is an anticipatory pause, a moment of luxury, with the day, all the happy day, before her. Now I reach an open pasture, her laugh is in the breeze and the nodding ferns.

Moonlight—moon a little beyond the half, well up to the zenith at half past eight; it seems to aspire less high

than the more mature moons that shall follow. It skirts the sky rather than climbs it, veering well to the southward. The shrubs and the trees cast long shadows northward. The stars shine faintly, yet are the constellations well defined. The long swing of the Dipper, the index finger pointing to the Northern Star—to those my eyes invariably turn.

Standing by a shrub of witch-hazel, I notice the extended branches, the motionless leaves (for there is hardly any air stirring), and feel that there is a particular significance in the attitude. That outreaching twig has now more meaning than when thus extended in the broad daylight.

There is a heavy dew, notwithstanding the moon. A mist lies or hovers over the pond. The frogs are still; crickets chirrup in the grass—a sound at once sad and cheerful. Their little voices ring so lonely in the silence that one might almost discover their lurking places. The trailing morning-glories, those pink-tinged cups, are open, filled perhaps with dew, each chalice turned to the moon. There is a little ringing sound at the marshy edge—the misty willows beyond.

Started out for a walk at about half past four. The sky was overcast; a thin veil interposed between the earth and the sun. Brush fires to the southwest contributed to thicken the atmosphere.

Passed up through the wood where grows the beautiful beech that first of its kind, I think, ever laid hold of my affections, a swelling form under its tight velvety covering. The lichens on its bole are of a cold blue and

gray, inclining sometimes to yellow; the darker blotches of bronze seem also to be a variety of lichen. The brighter colors, however, the pinkish tinge sometimes perceptible and the light bluish spots, are apparently little uncoated showings of the bark itself. Not content with this wonderful variety of mottled decoration, Nature has inspired the lower lichens with a love of this smooth denizen of the wood, whose high instep is clothed in the velvet and vital hues of wet mosses.

Near this tree stands a hemlock, black in the shadow of its own branches. A great maple trunk rises beside it, so ridged and scaly with age that at the first glance the two are apparently of the same species. The hemlock is less scaly, perhaps, but the principal difference lies in the color, the hemlock being darker and reddish.

Further on I pass into the woody road where I have so many times listened to the thrushes. Two gray birches, in the recesses of shadow, shine with a dimmed opaque brightness, as if their trunks were of the texture of wax. In the pasture I come upon a dead maple, splintered—lightning-stricken. Dead or leafless branches, particularly if seen against the solid mass of summer verdure, are possessed of a singular charm. As I walk I am accompanied by a slight tapping sound, made by the grasshoppers leaping out of my way and alighting on the thin carcasses of the leaves.

There lies a swampy bit to my left. Ash trees grow in and about it. The smaller, though they are probably the innocent saplings of the black or the white ash, have too close a resemblance to the poison elder, which is after all, I believe, a kind of sumach. Is there some likeness to

tropical foliage in a pinnate leaf that gives it its subtle suggestion of poison?

There is a singular absence of underbrush in this wood; green lakes of tossing ferns are here, and occasionally the dusky little pyramid of a young hemlock, but around these verdant spots the dead leaves show pale among the tree trunks. The eye, so often balked and bewildered by a wild confusion and multiplicity of forest forms, is here caught and tempted by the mystery of far-reaching glades. The light is blue on the lateral sprays of beech and maple.

I think I never before realized the wealth of beauty in ferns. These, in the tempered light of the wood, are fresh and green, in no respect shrunk, dried, or coarsened, as are those of the open meadow. I find myself in a veritable sea of verdure. They toss about the trunk of a young maple as dances the surf at the foot of a rock. Yet they are motionless, for no wind is stirring here. Theirs is the dead commotion and silent breaking of the Mer de Glace, at once so dense and so transparent. They present a variety of aspects accordingly as they happen to meet the eye, exhibiting in a modified degree the coloring that leaves take from their position in regard to the light. They would be most interesting to paint.

Under the trees the young shoots, a woody stem crowned by two or three leaves (if they be maple), shine star-like on the dark ground. Among these I come upon a sprig of cherry—its beautiful smooth slender leaves. I look in vain for some tiny sprout of maple that still retains the cotyledons as leaves.

The trunks of the basswood, so straight and evenly

ribbed, remind me of the tulip trees down South, though they in no wise compare with the latter. It is a very large tree here, and branches far up. The leaves looked thin and tattered, threadbare, on every basswood I saw that day; they appeared to be blighted.

By a grove of young beeches, into the grass-grown road. I hear no singing birds now; the air is full of the chirping of crickets and all the choir Orthoptera, and the cry of the tree toad, that, when once it is raised, ceases only with the ending of the season. Its thin quavering voice seems to ring throughout the latter days of summer.

Down the path are two beeches, one lichen-coated, the other almost bare, the sleek trunk striped in broad dark bands like the marking on a bull's hide. A birch, clinging to the side of a rock, writhes, glistening and serpentine, from the crevices below.

Presently the path gives out upon the meadow again. Below in the valley is the gray ruin of a sugar-house. Back up the slope there are some fine old cherry trees in the pasture. A goldfinch skips on before me from shrub to shrub.

The sun is setting over Nebraska Notch and those nameless mountains. It is a dim and cloudy exit. A veil of smoke floats before Mount Mansfield. The face seen through this filmy interposition wears a singular inscrutable look, an expression full of subtle meaning.

Skirting the wood again. Damp and dusky now. Through the meadow; no longer the tapping of nimble grasshoppers. Moths fly out of the brakes and gleam under the dark boughs; spiders hang in the centre of their webs; the secret things of night are abroad.

THE ADIRONDACKS

THE ADIRONDACKS,
September.

LEAVING Plattsburg, the cars run south and for a short distance skirt the shore of the Lake, and far across its shining extent a group of mountains shows mistily upon the horizon. For one moment, being confused about the points of the compass, I did not know them; then with a sudden emotion I recognized that mighty central form. Though dwarfed and disproportioned, there lay the great profile, the chin heaved up against the sky, and all the lesser of the Green Mountains clustered around it—Sterling to the northeast, the Nebraska peaks rising west and south—calm and reposeful, the sleeping giant with his awful and passionless countenance.

My Mountain! With a swelling heart, with the rise of emotion that shakes the voice and brings tears into the eyes, I looked back at Mount Mansfield. Clouds, touched by the setting sun, rested upon the highest point of the chin, and above them, white as smoke, hung the moon. The sight was borne in upon me like the swelling strains of some immortal music. The Pilgrim Chorus, which has been associated in my mind with that mountain, the magnificent ebb and flow of that passion of sound, came back to me.

The silent Mountain spoke in a voice of undying har-

mony, great and tender; it was the theme of home and country; for not ten miles to the eastward, lying there in the shadow of that Great Stone Face, was my Valparaiso—my vale of Paradise.

Loon Lake. Early morning; mackerel clouds in the west; sunrise; the drive over. The water-lily-decked lake surface, northern extremity of Loon Lake; wild and rugged shore. How beautiful—beautiful compared with travelling in the South! Thank God for the white pines!

Paul Smith's. This morning misty; heavy clouds, damp and cold. Walked into grove of white pines, red pines, and spruces, hemlocks, birches, etc. The white pines are fine large trees, also the red, whose bark, in flat plates, looks like beaten silver off which a wash of gold is partly worn.

Beyond this grove there is a marshy place where the wind made a thin and icy whisper in the lean reeds. Pines, these white pines, go far to reconcile one to his fate should it lead him into these wilds, but I found myself drawn with a deeper affection to the hemlocks.

Walk in wood. The white pines very impressive, great shafts over one hundred feet high, in every way a grander tree than the loblolly, except the cones. The birches are the black, gray, and canoe, these latter often of the most delicate color where newly stripped—pink, ashen-silvery, and a pale lilac-mauve. The fir balsam trunks are mottled like beeches; the beeches themselves few and far between. Here's the confusion and the rot-

ting waste that of old thwarted my inclination for the woods; there's no prejudice in my preference for the forests of Vermont.

This afternoon in the woods it was terribly desolate. The air was still—not a sound to be heard—complete and awful stillness. It was a most dismal and solitary place. I felt lonesome as I never remember feeling in the Vermont woods, for they are full of friends—rock maples and beeches. There's something strange and unapproachable about these pines. We feel somehow that they are old with a terrible age like the oldness of the Sphinx; that they now live and flourish as they lived and flourished centuries ago, when these modern birches, beeches, and maples were unknown; that they belong to the original growth and are in a way linked with the mysterious past, that they figured in prehistoric landscapes. They reach further back than the Indian, and may well have appeared to him with somewhat of the awfulness with which they now impress me. Out of the heart of the forest—there's no neighborly spread of branches—they rise straight and isolated. I wonder that man ever summoned courage to strike his axe into the heel of one of these giants!

Some men had been cutting spruces and hemlocks, and the fresh discarded boughs lay all about me. There were innumerable spider webs catching the light in prismatic tints, and before me an enormous gray spider was in the act of spinning his trap in the fork of a little spruce tree, silently lowering himself, and then slowly, with a display of all his terrible legs, going up hand over hand;

the sight sickened me. At length he desisted, and sat at the very extremity of a little leafless twig, with his legs drawn up about him, looking for all the world like an imp with his arms akimbo.

To-night before the moon rose, beautiful starlight. The evening star over St. Regis mountain reflected as a long line of light in the lake below. The further shore seemed to be like clouds in sunset; a silvery stretch of water, pale as the sky, lay close under the shore, breaking the reflection.

The stars, as I moved, seemed to peep from among the boughs of the pines. The tall trunks stood black against the starlit sky and the dimmer starlight in the lake.

This is an interesting question about the sound of the wind in trees.

Aspens, easily identified by the sound—a tapping like the fall of rain on leaves, a kind of rattling.

Maples, observed in *Acer rubrum*—a continuous sound, like the rush of water.

Alders and birches (black and white)—a fluttering sound, harsh at a distance.

The wind in the thin reedy grass that grows in the sand along the lake's margin gives out a cold and silvery whisper.

Of the evergreens, the pines are especially fine-toned; theirs is a hollow cry, full and continuous, like the rumor of the ocean, the roll of surf. The music of the distant sea is in all evergreens, while the sound made by the wind

among the boughs of deciduous trees is not so deep, so long, but is rather like the rush of a cascade.

The manner of branching and growth of leaves has all to do with the sound; as, for instance, more uniform and deeper music might be made by a beech than a maple. The character of the leaves, again, has its effect, as detected in the wind-made sounds in aspens and poplars, occasioned probably by the long petiole, and, to instance again, in the "furry boughs" of the pines.

The cry of the hounds is a fine note and a stirring. I should think that any fox or deer within hearing would start to his feet, impelled less perhaps by terror than by the quality of the sound. It's a cry of alarm too. It has taken centuries of training, probably, to bring that hunting music to its present perfection. That detonative utterance must be a thrilling call to the huntsman. "Ding, dong!" One can hear a pack tolling a mile away in the forest.

I think the hemlock is acknowledged the most beautiful of the evergreens—it is so to me. The flat and spreading branches form a natural canopy; the bare twigs are as interesting as those of a deciduous tree, and are infinitely more delicate. Not so the bare twigs of spruces; they grow too close, and their minutely knotted character gives them, when gray and dry, the appearance of a frosty network—the dew-coated web of some giant spider.

Sounds again. I think a beech near which I listened for some time made a fuller and softer noise in the wind

than I had yet heard from any deciduous tree. In these woods of great evergreens and saplings it is difficult to pursue the investigation of these leafy voices.

I noted again the striped birch—white or canoe? the latter, I am almost sure—of a most tender and beautiful tint and of so fine an edge, sharp as a knife against the dark and tangled background.

Cold cloudy autumnal morning; an absolutely even light, a shadowless and sunless day.

The lake, stirred by the wind and reflecting no feature of the shore, shines a dead opaque silver-gray to its furthest margin. It lies like a lake of quicksilver in the hollow of the hills.

Later, stratified clouds, breaking and disclosing lateral glints of the blue sky; a thin interposition of vapor, shredding like gray birch bark.

St. Regis mountain mottled with the red and orange of the rock maples.

Beautiful clear day. Wind west-southwest; the foliage of the hemlocks, turned by the wind, shows very silvery. The cones hang like little carved wooden roses.

This afternoon I walked along the margin of the lake. The wind was still blowing fresh, and a little surf was rising. The sun went down in the gap between St. Regis and the little hills to the northward. As he disappeared I raised my eyes, that, liberated from the thrall of too much brightness, opened on the scene with something of the sensation of a renewed sight. The wood

along the lake's margin was of a deep and vital green; St. Regis stood out blue against the sky; the spurs of the northern hills were purple. Behind the scanty tops of pines a few clouds just over the sun were lit in long and slender shreds of gold; two vapory fragments northward were touched with pink, and to the southward a single floating cloud, like a fish in an amber sea, faded from lilac to silver. The air grew cold. The pines in the grove near the hotel stood tall against the light, all warped away from the sunset, stooping to the east, their heads drawn close together like dark conspirators.

Afterward, passing among them, I heard far above me their mingled utterance. There was no whisper of conspiracy; they seemed, the rather, to be telling some melancholy tale in doleful chorus; their voices were deep and turbulent.

As the sun went down, dark places seemed to show in the wood, tree trunks stood out against a sombre background. Looking across that vacant water at the hills about, that stand arrayed very much as they did years ago (the growth has changed, to be sure, in great part, but they are still wild and wooded), there came home to me some suggestion of the tragedy that lives in the history of the Indian. I thought then, that on just such an evening as this, two hundred years ago, this sandy shore, where I stepped, might have known the footprint of some other, alien in race and temperament, and that the imprint of a moccasin might have shown in the sand, revealed without wonder to the eye of Nature.

There is something mean and meagre in the aspect of civilized man. I am sure I seem poor in comparison to

that fancied heroic figure that, plumed and glistening as an eagle, fierce and supple as a snake, stood where I now stand, gazing across the lake. And though we recognize so close a relation between the Indian and his environment that in describing him we fall naturally into similes drawn from the air and the forest, yet I feel that I am not any the less native. Say that he was as close to Nature as the beasts of the earth; his was the attitude of a child toward its mother; while we, who have so far succeeded in life as to be able to find time for something beyond the struggle for existence, can mingle thought and reason with our love, can venture upon a footing of reverential friendship. But the picturesque aspect of such a one! He might have been a warrior of the terrible Iroquois, a Seneca of the Five Nations, the banded terror of the North; for these lakes doubtless lay within the circle of fear that their fame imposed beyond their boundaries—in the shadow of the Long House.

How strange it is that I, who reckon myself a deep and passionate lover of my country, should feel so close an affection for it and be so convinced of the intimacy of my attachment, should boldly declare it my country, when my claim is in point of time so slight! What right have I to call it mine, when I stand upon these shores almost a stranger, and when the dark shadow of another race rises up behind me to claim it—a race that had grown old in the land before, not three hundred years ago, my ancestors first set foot on Plymouth Rock?

This inquiry is natural, but here I confuse nature with country. My country is not alone in the hills and valleys, lakes and rivers, forests and skies of America;

it lives in the faith and valor of the Puritans, in the Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, the Civil War; in Washington, Lincoln, and Emerson and Hawthorne as well; my country is America, the Great Republic.

It is this history that, as well as my culture, has made me here more native than the Indian. I have a claim upon the land stronger than that of mere occupancy. We have made this country ours by the right of living in it, not merely existing off it.

Walking back along the water's edge, I noticed the ribbed sand below the surface; the lake turned silvery and cold. The clouds above the point of the sun's setting grew redder, the lines less vivid, points and flashes of gold appearing here and there. The chirping of the crickets had no music to stay me; I hurried home.

Cold starlight. Looking south, I saw a meteor shoot across the sky, glow red, and vanish.

On the little hill the roots of the trees are crossed and recrossed in an almost undecipherable tangle, rived and knotted together. I think the angels in the war of Paradise Lost might indeed have plucked up this hill bodily by seizing on the tree-tops.

The unparallelled beauty of maple leaves, shape and color, the exquisite colors on the under sides of the turned leaves—crimson, a plushy pink, etc. Beech leaves, waxy—so easily distinguished—waxy both in texture and color. I could look at the beech saplings near the pine grove as long as trees have any interest for me.

By the lake the leaves of the aspen shoots grow to an enormous size, larger than basswood leaves; it was as if one should see the leaf under a microscope. By rough estimate, eight inches across and eight in length.

The rock maples and some of the birches have turned; the swamp maples are deeply colored, and the arrow-wood is bronze and ruddy—very beautiful tints. Tiny aspen saplings seem to change before the alders, which stand yet very green, the green-gray trunks, the dull greens of the leaves, forming a striking contrast to the other trees. They stand in an almost spring-like greenness. Pines, purplish-gray.

The other day tracks in the sand were very interesting—prints of men, horses, dogs, and birds; these latter scrawled like Chinese characters all along the beach—the feet of crows, I think.

Of reddened maple leaves (*Acer rubrum*), the downiness of the under side gives a bluish tinge like the bloom of a peach.

The maple leaves for the most part fall when they ripen, turning to mellow yellows or crimson, but in the striped maple (*Acer pennsylvanicum*) they shrivel on the branch, hang limp and yellow. White birch leaves grow withered and ragged on the edges very often before they turn color.

I think the beeches are conspicuously green now, compared to the birches, both black and white. The beech turns to a beautiful golden tree in autumn, the leaves so uniformly perfect.

Who was it that to escape the embrace of Apollo was

converted into a tree? Daphne? The spirit of such a one may dwell in some of the birches, for instance the gray, with its smooth shining bark, its graceful drooping branches, or the white, with its inner bark tissues tinted as delicately as flesh. But my woodland goddess is the beech—I think the panther must have lain undistinguishable along those gray and mossy boughs.

The aspen leaf adapts itself, I think, to a sculptor's art, as a leaf that might be well in a bas-relief or a capital.

Strong wind all the morning; furtive shadows; coppery gleams; the sun in a dense haze. The mountain entirely shut out, and the opposite shore as dim and unsubstantial as a dream. Sun on water, broken and scattered reflection—coppery spangles.

This morning I heard the most plaintive, sweet, and seaboard cries, little timorous twitterings—some little birds that I could not see distinctly, swift and light of wing—redpolls?

On the lake. This morning the lake was rippled slightly, reflecting the sky. Only along the southern shore was there the smooth surface and the sunken reflection. Everywhere else it shone steely blue, like a shield in the sun, a silver mirror.

That sunrise at Loon Lake!—then the morning broke joyously into golden mirth. It came laughing over the hills, and the lake, Nature's mirror, laughed in response. Loon Lake might be the Laughing Lake.

Under the southeastern shore there still hangs a dark shadow. Even so little mist as there is in the air to-day

suffices to give that feeling of heavy mystery that these morning shadows seem to possess. Shadows as dense as vapors, thick, a dusky fluid, a dark tide ebbing in the rising light.

This morning a single silver line, sharp as a sword, pierced the gloom.

Lily-pads, turned golden, lie like cymbals, with the narrow cleft to the middle. Near the shores are arrow-head grasses.

I crossed the lake, and found a slow and tortuous way into a channel with low sedgy banks. The sun was warm and dazzling; a fresh breeze was blowing. Presently the channel opened out like a pond, the surface mottled with round lily leaves, green, gold, and red. I rowed on into the shadow of the further shore, for there the water skirted the edge of a wood. Birches, maples, and hemlocks rose high behind me, shutting out the sun.

It was delightful gliding into the chilly shade; a sweet damp odor was in the dead unheated air. It was like a draught of cold water to one parched with thirst. A pleasant breeze was there—it rustled in the trees on the opposite bank. I lay in the stern of my boat, looking and listening. Presently I heard a cock crow; the sound was distant, but it seemed to come from the wood. Then I realized the poetry of Thoreau's thought: how stirring that sound would have been as the cry of a wild bird in its native forest.

Wind cold, wintry. In the channel; interesting wooded shore. Birches all turned, hemlocks and spruces very dark. Here is mystery, the element that this scenery

in general lacks. The golden leaves are dense and glittering; soft penetrable glimpses; suggestive shades in the black boughs of the evergreens. Trees springing from the dead level of water seem very tall. Further on the channel opens out. A small wooded hill rises at its far end.

Perhaps the icy wind gave point to my imagination, but I could feel strongly the interest and beauty of the scene, leafless, clothed only in snow—a white coating on the outspread spruce branches; the evergreens doubly dark, the deciduous trees springing out from a covering of snow, their bare branches against a leaden sky; the bosky hill thus transformed, and the pond a sheet of ice.

Coming back, I lay down in the boat and let the wind propel me, occasionally touching the oars to keep her head straight down the stream. Before me the wind, catching the edges of the floating lily-pads, tossed them up upon the surface. They bobbed like a school of porpoises, or the head of a drowning man.

Last night the wind had many voices, mourning low and whistling shrilly.

Cold wintry day, the dull cold that presages snow. Wind from the west-northwest. Crossed the lake and entered the channel, down which I rowed for a considerable distance, much further than I have ever been before. The hemlocks, that partly compose the wood, are old trees with twisted branches and dark close foliage. I was mistaken in supposing the wood to be in great part of maples; contrasting with the dark-hued evergreens are the glittering yellows of birches and beeches, and only

on the very margin of the water shows the crimson of the red maples.

The water mirroring the sky and shore seemed of infinite depth. The sky was overcast with stratified and leaden clouds. The glassy channel reflected the woody bank with such delicate blending of light and shadow, such softness, wherein Nature as a portrayer of herself triumphs over Art. There was in the reflection all the mystery of a new and different scene: its shadowy recesses were the entrances into an unknown country. Its very remoteness was a provocative to the imagination; it seemed to lie back of the wood above, far in under the sedgy shore. Many of the young trees were leafless, and displayed a crown of fine drawn twigs against the sky.

Rowing back. For a time, when the boat swam noiselessly in a stretch of clear water, there was complete silence. Then a gust of wind would stir along the bank, and, as if that slight noise gave the cue to Nature, various sounds would break in upon the stillness—the distracted cawing of crows in dark and clamorous flight, the screaming of jays in the tree-tops, the whistling chirp of squirrels from the wood. Faint and shrilly along the dead face of the water the distant rattle of a kingfisher, and with these the thin wiry sound of the sliding keel among the rushes. On the opposite bank some ruffling sparrows hopped from twig to twig with a plaintive "cheep, cheep!"

This morning out riding; passed by Jones's Pond. If this scenery is impressive at all, it would be in such a place as this. The lake is dead, coated with floating lily-

pads. A little removed from the marshy shore, larches hung with gray mosses stand like cypresses in a Southern swamp. This has something of the primitive look—such desolate places as this might have been King Philip's retreat and refuge.

No change in the weather, the thermometer still in the neighborhood of forty; cloudy, clearing, with cold wind from the west.

On the lake the catspaws come darkling like the shadow of a harpy's wings; they sweep upon one with a fierce speed.

The breaking out of the sun was like a burst of music.

In the wood, out of the wind, although the air was cold it was very agreeable; there was the crisp autumnal quality in it, and from the ground arose the sweet odor from the fallen leaves. The sky was cloudy and the sun obscured, but it would occasionally peer out, and an answering brightness would appear in the wood, the dull yellows of the birch leaves kindled into gold. There is a silent sermon in the serene and patient attitude of Autumn. It is as if the seared leaves clung to the tree to catch the human eye and hold it with this spectacle of change and dissolution.

The beech saplings, with their shining sharp-toothed leaves and the persistency of their verdure, remind me continually of holly, even in the manner of their yellowing. The leaves of the shrubs of arrow-wood that skirt the path turn color in spots glowing crimson like drops of

blood, as if a hunt had lately passed along, the wounded deer staining the leaves. More often, turned whole and uniform, they shine in colors of rough tanned leather.

These crisp dead leaves betray the movements, however stealthy, of the little erstwhile silent woodland things.

It seems a little strange that this Autumn, which exceeds all the seasons in the brilliancy and gay beauty of her outward aspect, should nevertheless be of so pensive a mood, even to melancholy.

The sun shines through the boughs of the trees as red as blood—flashing like a gigantic carbuncle.

I wonder if Hawthorne's story of the Great Carbuncle might not have been suggested to him by such an evening walk, facing the red setting sun, and seeing it flash with such a bright metallic glimmer in among the leaves.

The seeming conformity of nature with one's mood, as in the nodding of grasses, the whisper of leaves.

The sunset on the lake—red fire.

Warmer. The dead buck—the group of guides—the dense misty background.

The wet transparent morning that follows after rain. The boat—its silver wake; the golden trees touched into vital color by a gleam of sunlight on the bank beyond. Echoes around the lake; the dead sound of a rifle's report in the damp wood.

Blood seen to-day on the road. How strong in most animals is the emotion that the sight of blood causes—a

kind of pity and horror that is perhaps an expression of our appreciation of its precious quality, its *vital* color!

Followed the direction of my last evening's walk and penetrated the unexplored portion of the path, which led me, as I imagined, out upon the road to Meacham Lake.

The air thick as smoke, but cold with a dead and bitter chill. Followed a little path to the very verge of Osgood Pond.

The opposite shores were dim and gray. Heard the far-away call of a kingfisher over the mist-hung water, but saw nothing. There was a cold wind blowing that stirred the rushes and the frost-bitten leaves of the alders along the bank.

It is a great relief for me to find myself free of the hotel, its environs and its population, for indeed a hotel is a mimic town. It is worth while to have declared defensive war against the world for the sake of the friendship that Nature extends to the solitary. I think any voice, even the most tuneful to my ears, would jar upon this silent intercourse.

The rush of the wind, the stirring of leaves, all the sounds of inanimate nature, speak to me in the language of friendship.

The chipmunk, sitting upon his haunches and cracking a beech nut—a pretty furry fellow with an eye like a berry, glistening, dew-coated.

In the wood sweet bird notes, an infectious melancholy—the fall of every leaf like the fall of a tear.

NEW YORK

New York,
October.

Into the Park at the Sixty-seventh Street entrance. Several pin oaks stand here, and give me always the first greeting. I stopped to watch a squirrel seated on a slender branch, erect, in the act of nibbling a nut. And standing motionless beside the motionless trees, I seemed to come as if by some subtle mesmeric transmission within the influence of their attitude; the immovable trunk, the still, extended branches, the quiet mien, affected me so powerfully that I stood still with a sense of having attained the end of my journey.

I glanced about me from the oaks to the evergreens, and found in them the same resigned and almost fatalistic calm. It seemed ruthless to break the spell, but the squirrel, with a sudden relinquishment of his couchant attitude, sprang upon the trunk and ran, with his claws audible along the bark, down to the ground, and his movement seemed to sanction mine.

Last night the half moon, red, in a faint mist. The fairy lake—the dim bosky shores and distant bridges reflected in the pale waters. The trailing branches of the weeping willows seemed to give the only evidences of life among the trees; they swayed slightly in the little breaths of air.

In Central Park. Sky overcast; interesting spongy clouds to the northeast; ovals (lakes) and strips of light metallic blue; strong wind from west-southwest; dead leaves in the wind, like animate impish things; under sides of bay leaves; a true autumn day.

Oh, the charm of bare twigs, the silvery twigs of little beeches! Leaves of sweet gum turning soberly a bronze red, like some oak leaves.

November.

Cold; wind west-southwest. Sky of a clear pale autumnal blue. There is, however, a genial influence in the air that strongly suggests the spring. The wind also, with its chill and velvety touch, is a gentle reminder; the air is smooth.

Life! Life! Trees and squirrels, and on the branches of a pin oak a chickadee, sleek, plump, and merry. Nature's attitude is a brave one to-day. There's no autumnal melancholy and foreboding; her laughter, an inaudible spiritual utterance that is echoed in the wind, the dancing sunlight, and the note of the chickadee, is as gay and careless as if her outlook were spring rather than the dead and vacant winter.

Passed by some rocks and shrubbery about which many birds twittered and flew, and caught a glimpse of one, large, purple-tinged, that I thought might prove to be a pine grosbeak. Another glimpse revealed the high-crested head of a cardinal. It was the female cardinal grosbeak, and the second after I saw the male flash through the bare boughs of a little sassafras. He gave warmth and color to the scene.

I walked in a grove of white pines in the hope of seeing a pine grosbeak. The trees greeted me with a deep note of welcome, tossing up their green and furry boughs.

The water in the lower reservoir is blue, though much more brilliant than any known color [pigment].

How many beautiful evergreens there seem to be in the Park, besides the most beautiful, holly. Cedars of Lebanon, somewhat like larches in leaf.

The persistent leaves of the oak trees rustle harshly. To-day there was no great movement and commotion among the leaves, on account of the moderate wind, but I noticed, notwithstanding, in unsheltered corners, some skipping fragments caught in a sudden spasm, circling in a kind of mad St. Vitus's rigadoon.

Sheep on the east side, giving a particular interest to the open reserved as a playground for children. So many pretty children—sweet faces, round and rosy. It's hard to know where to direct one's interest, whether to the trees, the birds, or the people.

The late red autumnal sunsets and the crescent moon.

Half past four, sunset. Went out at the first indication of a breaking away among the clouds. Wind from the west-northwest; air cold. Yesterday the thermometer stood (earlier in the day) at sixty-two. The wet tree trunks black against the light. In the northwest quarter of the horizon the clouds have lifted, leaving exposed stretches of the sky that gleam a pale metallic green; on this float fragments of gold and heavier masses of purple, stretching horizontally across the light.

The light sweeps at length around the entire circle, far into the spongy east, where the dark purple horizon fades to the blue of the heavy clouds above.

The sunset, growing redder, glows behind the dark evergreens. The wind wakes a response in the pines.

The dried oak leaves shiver on the branches. The film of water on the pavement is, I think, partly frozen. The twigs and leaves are glistening wet.

Coming out into any open place, one is conscious of a lifting of the gloom, a lease of light, so masked is the effect of the interposed and tangled branches. How beautiful is this season of naked trunks and delicate bare twigs!—not like the earlier autumn, that is a scant and wasted semblance of the full summer.

The sunset fades from red to ashen hues. All color is withdrawn from the pale green lakes, below the clouds that gleam cold and white.

December.

It is warm, wet, and spring-like. The wind is moist and cool. The sky is the pale opaque blue of April. It is as if the unawakened Spring stirred in her sleep.

Later the wind blows colder; above is again the sun-flooded pale autumnal heaven.

Sunset clouds of a wonderfully vital purple, gold-edged, gradually fading to the dusky magenta-purple commonly seen.

Clear, cold day. How light these winter skies are!

The Park is full of the thin wintry lisp of the chickadee.

Peacocks—the blues and gold of their trailing tail feathers on the yellowish green of the grass.

What wind stirring is from the west. The air is very still; the reflection of the bare and fawn-colored shore is perfect, except toward the centre of the lake, where there is a little motion, so slight that it reflects no glint of the sky, but quivers white, like heated air.

Stars glimmer more slowly out of this pale winter twilight than from the duskier summer skies.

To-day in the Park. The sky is of a singular blue color, like the skies of summer or early fall. There are numerous fleecy white clouds gathering heavily in places, but between them, in beautiful gradations of color, from the pale horizon to the almost purple depth of the apex, shows this summer sky.

The wind is from the north and seems to threaten snow, although it is not very cold; the air is temperate.

The lake shows gray under the clouds. By the shore I came upon the pair of beautiful cardinals that I saw last late in November and had begun to regret as absent friends. This fellow, the male, is vividly red, and, if I am not deceived, of a more delicate hue than others I have seen. He is almost rose-red—colored like the breast feathers on the rose-breasted cardinal. There were also in their company several chickadees.

I saw a white and black bird resting a moment in the boughs of a little maple, and on approaching found it to be a small downy woodpecker. Afterward I heard his sharp rat-tap. It is a fine, clear, decisive sound. There is something admirable in the seeming directness of his

methods of obtaining his dinner; other birds, twittering and flitting about in the dried leaves, seem futile and procrastinating compared with this silent, alert, and nimble creature. His note is admonitory—like the tap of a school-teacher's pencil recalling the class to business.

A heavy fall of snow last night. The trees beyond the Park paling at the end of the street are covered; a thick white coating follows the direction of every twig and exaggerates the complexity of their branching. It lies so heavily on the outspread branches of the evergreens that hardly any indication of their real color is apparent. It is like a dense white leafage. On the deciduous trees it is so soft and thick, a kind of sessile frosty foliage like the flowering sprays of the Judas-trees in spring, only that this wintry florescence is white.

Looking south is looking into Fairyland, the country of Jack Frost. Trunks, boughs, and twigs are all of the same fragile glistening texture. It seems as if a sudden gust might shatter it like a dream, or that it might waste and dwindle in the sunshine.

I walked southward down the long aisle of the Mall. The distance closed in on a confusion of white shadowless objects. Here, in a wind-protected spot, the boughs are heavy. The eye loses itself in a mass of white netted branches, as baffling as the intricacies worked in a spring sunshine.

Nature, beautiful in extremes: the rhododendron and other evergreen plants are most beautiful under their white covering, notably a little shrub of holly with its

glistening green leaves—leaves designed to prick through the snow.

Of the evergreens, I think the circling needles of the spruce hold the snow best. The flat spread of the branches is also an assistance. It slips from the long glassy needles of the white pines, but the Austrian pines again retain it well. The white birches are dusky—of a dull pinkish hue. They seem on better terms with winter than the other trees; they meet the eye with none of the phenomenal brightness that distinguishes them in a summer landscape. The dead leaves clinging to the boughs of the beeches make a sharp rustling sound as the melting snow from the twigs above falls among them.

High above pigeons circled, white wings flashing against the gray sky.

The far-off ringing of sleigh-bells is like the summer sound of tree toads or of frogs in spring.

People seem to realize with greater force the phenomena of winter. A snowfall is always an event, and in the sense of a strange environment, under what appear new and unusual conditions, people are apt to give freer expression to the natural joy of being in the open air.

Thermometer at about freezing; strong gusty wind from the west. A beautiful clear day, with a blue winter sky full of hurrying white clouds. The Austrian pines are of a deeper and more vital green than our evergreens, notably the white pine; they stand dark patches of rich color against the snow.

Looking across the little lake to the willows on the opposite shore, that show the liveliest bit of color in the landscape, the twigs are of a bright yellow ochre, and beside them the clinging oak leaves, that are ordinarily important points of color, seem dull and gray.

On the crown of a little hill that rises like smoke, a mist of pale deciduous boughs, a group of evergreens—white pines and spruces—stand dark and solid. The wind makes a hollow sound in the pines, a sound familiar enough in all seasons, but always, even in the midst of summer, with bleak and frosty suggestions, and now the very voice of Winter. It is truly the only leafy voice of the season; the thin rustling of the persistent dead leaves, like those of the oaks and beeches, can hardly be so called.

As I looked southward to the sun, the bare twigs glistened like dew-coated spider webs—threads of gossamer. The southern horizon, flooded with white sunlight, is a colder outlook than the north.

Clear, with a blustering wind blowing from the west or west-southwest. The gloom of passing clouds and the wonderful radiance of returning sunshine.

Saw the cardinal grosbeaks at very close quarters. I have no words for the splendor of the male. The most surprising fact in connection with them is that they are not the only pair wintering in Central Park; to-day I saw another couple. They were all in the vicinity of the pea and guinea fowls' feeding-ground, in a sheltered place out of the wind. There were numberless English sparrows there, greedy and quarrelsome, who, between their expeditions to the charmed circle of scattered corn,

crowded together in the bare twigs of a little shrub, looking cold and discontented, "very poor and beggarly"; contrasting most unfavorably with the lofty bearing of the cardinals, who seemed to-day as blithe and confident as if a summer sun shone upon them—and the thermometer at twenty-five! Their note is a thin sound.

Two little chickadees, high up in the cold wind, sliding from bough to bough of a leafless oak, no less a contrast to the soulless sparrows. The chickadees appeared to be as merry as crickets, though their twittering seemed shaken from them by the cold and blustering wind.

At a certain spot near the lake, where underbrush and small shrubs abound, the little leafless twigs looked like smoke creeping up the hillside.

January.

This is the first real winter day we have had. As I entered the Park from the southeast, I met the wind right in the face. The sky was gradually being overspread with a gray cloud rising in the west. Snow began to fall; the flakes danced about in the gray atmosphere, sweeping down into one's eyes. The air was intensely cold, as was the spirit of the whole scene—the leafless dusky bushes, the ice-coated trees, the crisp crunching snow.

We have had autumnal days and spring days, but before this no winter day. Here was the touch, the voice, the breath of Winter; the impression was as vivid as that created by the first snowfall. The wind rose rapidly; the sky cleared, the sun bursting out as the snowflakes still

fell, and there were sharp blue shadows on the snow. I felt that strange and comfortable sensation of existence, of being—warmly and actively alive in the face of such white and death-like immobility. Perhaps this accounts for the *fact* of winter having escaped me the past two months. I have seen and noted too much *life*.

Perhaps the associations of warmth and comfort, of open blazing hearths contrasted with outer cold, unconsciously entered into the feeling of delight with which I saw the dull gray cloud mount in the west.

People's thoughts might take on a more personal interest at this time of the year; the atmospheric conditions in a primitive state would compel it. The dead and chilling season adds another to our winter coverings; it draws a close mantle of egotism about us.

People should be more characteristic, with wider differences of thought, in winter than in summer; like wood and metal, we are contracted by the cold.

February.

It is a wonderful, bright, warm spring sunshine. On the bridge: New York with white wreaths of blown smoke along the housetops, the crawling ferry-boats below, and the wide stretch of the bay, bounded by the long bow of Staten Island, on the sides of which the snow glimmers.

A soft delightful air. Home through the Park by the lower pond; children and women skating.

There is something strange and delightful in witnessing an out-of-door exercise wherein women seem to move upon an equal footing with men. Of the two on

the ice, the female is decidedly the more interesting figure. Her skirts give her a dignity that is wanting to the spindling trousers of the modern male costume. Every movement gains in force and significance with its accompanying flow of drapery. There is a rakishness in the swinging skirt and the flash of light along the blade of momentarily discovered skate.

March.

Buds on all trees in Park. Cloudy wet day; wind northeast.

On a cold winter day of one of the two past months in the Park, the trees being ice-coated to their tiniest twigs, the whole face of Nature assumed a gray tone, on which people moved with a startling effect of color.

[March 12, 1888.]

Sunday, and some part of yesterday, there occurred the most terrific storm of wind and snow that has been known for years in this city—I believe, the most severe on record, but it has brought the redpolls on its white wings. I saw a flock in the Park this afternoon. They had a way of sliding about from twig to twig like chickadees.

A mild spring day. The buds are fairly out; I notice particularly the slender plaited sheaths of the beech buds. Pass by a little snow-bound brook that is vociferous under its coating of rotten ice. Its voice is a vital spring sound; it is hoarse with delight.

I hear some sweet bird notes and the thin whistle of

the cardinals. These I saw, and a large black glossy bird that lit in the top branches of a pin oak, with a curious "chuck, chuck." I afterward concluded this to be a grackle.

As I was turning homeward, I heard a strong and thrilling song; it was like the striking of a single bell. I stopped and retraced my steps. I saw the grackle in a spruce about two hundred yards distant, and from this direction the song seemed to proceed. As I approached, the notes grew louder—they were singularly sweet and strong. I think I have not been so deeply affected by a bird note since I last heard the hermit thrushes in the woods about Stowe. This was a startling outburst, wonderfully sustained. "Cling, cling, cling, cling," it chimed, seeming to ring in the spring. The grackle flew away as I came close to the tree, but the song proceeded, and presently in the topmost branches I saw the male cardinal.

I had never before heard any but their sharp winter note; this was another of the poetic revelations of spring. I experienced a new feeling toward the bird. Before, his courage and his beauty had excited my admiration; but his song touched me deeper. I used to watch him with a complacent pleasure, pleased at his proud and confident bearing and the brilliancy of his crimson uniform; but now I look upon him with a new affection, with a feeling that approaches nearly to pity.

There is always something pathetic in the manifestation of a touch of passion where it seems strange, as in the singing of a child. There is a confession, in such a case, of the common pain of living—real, it may be, or

prophetic; and with regard to the bird, his song found a response, perhaps, in our common fate.

A cloudy day; slight wind from the west; slight and scattering falls of snow. From the so-called Ramble across the lake come sweet summer-like bird notes. There I find a flock of fox sparrows, some chickadees and slate-colored snowbirds. The latter, the first I have ever seen, sober-tinted birds, yet with a dazzling display of their white tail feathers; active and pretty, with a thin wintry note.

The snow comes floating down in large soft flakes, sinking gently through the air, but occasionally a rising gust will whirl them among the trees, and fill the air so densely that one can hardly see a hundred yards. It is very pleasant, warm, and spring-like between these little white flurries, and then the birds are active. Three grackles flew over my head with a plaintive unmusical cry. I saw a hairy woodpecker, and a tiny sharp-billed gray bird marked with white and black above, and below buffy-pink—a tiny creature, stout and comical, with a fair stretch of wing but a small and stunted tail. It seemed to be a creeper, running nimbly along tree trunks and branches; its beak was sharp and pointed, and it had a curious way of throwing back its head and extending its bill skyward. It uttered a low strange note. It was, I afterward discovered on visiting the case of North American birds at the Museum of Natural History, a red-breasted nuthatch.

On my way home I noticed a commotion in the boughs of an Austrian pine, and there beheld a crossbill,

white-winged or American, burying his salmon-colored head and neck in among the leaves. I could hear the click of his strong beak. There was a grace and silence in his method of feeding that suggested the hummingbird; flitting from bough to bough and alighting, he would thrust his head into the tufts of glistening needles as a bumblebee buries himself in a flower.

As I passed a tulip tree by the drive, I noticed some of the flowers already out.

Home in a whirl of snowflakes.

Thermometer about twenty. To-day cold; blustering wind, roaring in the branches. A typical March day, rude enough and yet with a touch of caprice—changing from leaden frowns to broad and genial smiles. A stiffening wind; the trees seem to strengthen themselves to resist it; the less stalwart forms shrink before it. My face seems to harden into an expression of determination, as I walk on in the teeth of it.

Thermometer still about twenty. The wind had somewhat abated this morning. I passed through the Park at about twelve o'clock. In some evergreens by the drive I heard several grackles, no very musical hearing, for their note was rather like the squeaking and grating of rusty hinges. In the afternoon I saw again the fox sparrows, and heard their clear whistling note. The grosbeaks were flying in company with them. We had a fine view of the male, high up in the leafless branches, in the strong afternoon sun.

The day was like a winter day; even in sheltered

spots the warm sunshine was wintry rather than spring-like.

On our way home, in a grove of pines I caught a glimpse of a bird that seemed strange to me. I was able to approach quite near to it, and could see it distinctly from below. It seemed to have a black head, the back, wings, and tail marked with black, white, and yellow, the throat, nape, and shoulders yellow, the breast the same color tinged slightly with pink, and the rump white. It was a bird of about the size and shape of a pine grosbeak, I thought, not so large as a robin. I am mightily inclined to believe it was an evening grosbeak, although I see from Ridgway that they are only as far east (usually in winter) as Ohio. Might not the blizzard have brought this one? Its note was a short melancholy chirp.*

April.

I have seen numerous juncos, seed-picking and hopping in company with the fox sparrows. There are song sparrows also. I have twice seen one, singing from the branch of a tree, in that enraptured pose, the head invariably thrown back, the ruffled throat displayed, and the tail depressed at an obtuse angle to the body.

Sometimes toward evening, when the day has been mild, their song comes with a touching sweetness from an unfrequented little peninsula, full of a light growth of young trees and bushes, that puts out into the lake.

After some difficulty I have succeeded in locating—of tracing to its unstable source—a sweet, strong whistling

* There seems to be no previous record of this bird's appearance in eastern New York earlier than the winter of 1889–90.

song, a rapid succession of notes, cheerful notwithstanding they are of a contralto quality—a song with none of the prophetic sadness that is in almost all bird music; it is the note of the fox sparrow.

The junco's is a little shivering strain, unmodulated—a single note shaken into the air, faint and musical.

For a few days past the grass has been pricking out, a strong bluish green. The evergreens seem less olive and purple, but they will probably soon fade, sadly in contrast with the deciduous trees.

I have been vouchsafed an especial revelation: I have been admitted to the company of a goddess. I say this in the consciousness of a peculiar and personal manifestation, since although the vision was open to the day and in the eye of many, they had not the wit to comprehend its full significance. I met Diana in Central Park. She had outwardly, in all respects, conformed to the spirit of the time. She was completely and even fashionably dressed. Her jacket was the skin of an arctic seal, which I am inclined to think she had bought; even her dog, in deference to the Park authorities, she held in leash. The one suggestion of wildness that redeemed her was a glint of crimson in her hat—a gleam like a scarlet tanager. She was gayer than a goldfinch, more startling than a redstart. She never looked at me as I stood at the side of the path, but passed on with her keen, soulless blue eyes fixed on the distance. Her gold hair curled on her low forehead; the Greek profile was still preserved, the straight nose, the short lip, the full chin, while in her cheek the blood stirred with a tender vital glow.

The scattering notes of birds are carried past my ear along the strong west wind. There is something exhilarating in its rush and tumult!

The peacocks' screaming is blown faint to the eastward, and follows in the wind with a wild suggestion. Westward by the lake, where I sit down to rest, I hear a musical twittering, and, following the sound, come upon a tiny, trim, olive-backed bird of the color of the outer petals of a water lily that grow pale, even as in this bird the dusky olive of the back fades to the dusky white of the breast. Her mate, whom I saw a few seconds afterward, gave me the clue to her variety and sex; she was the female gold-crowned kinglet. The male I saw close by. He was less shy; in the confidence of his innocence, he flitted among the bushes within four feet of my approach.

I was doubtful of him for an instant, for, as he turned, the gold of his crown glimmered so ruddy on the occiput that I thought perhaps he might be a ruby-crown, but the two dark streaks bordering the gold identified him. He uttered a note something like a chickadee's.

I saw a goldfinch, and afterward heard him singing in the boughs of a spruce. As he left the tree, he rested for an instant, silhouetted on a twig against the sun, and then took flight with the light springing motion that is characteristic of his merry mood. He's a slim and dainty creature.

On the bank at the water's edge a swan sat asleep, a soft and dazzling object, under the open boughs of a pin oak that threw angular shadows on the grass. The wind was somewhat lulled, and the sunshine so warm as to

cheat our senses with an atmosphere of summer and give play to the warmer current of summer fancies. One might have looked for a more startling sight beyond the bend of the little peninsula, for a sleep more poetic than that of a swan, a substance more delicate than his softest feathers, more luminous than the dazzling whiteness of his wings. Not to push the thought into an uninspired commonplace, leaving the vulgar instance of Leda unmolested, what a startling idea is that of the Greek admiration of humanity and nature, dissociated from the coldness of its sculptured transmission!

April in this climate is, however, too harsh for us to see the migrations of the nymphs. The robin and the song sparrow, birds of the open spring and windy meadows, are not their harbingers. They come with the mystery of leaves, and haunt dusky places with the wood thrush.

There was a touch of inclemency in the air that made one shiver almost in the instant of suggestion.

In the warm shelter of the Ramble I saw again the gold-crowned kinglets, and, flitting in the self-same manner among some box-like bushes, their near connections, the ruby-crowned—birds a trifle larger, plump and sleek, with bright confident eye. The crown of the male is a brilliant crimson with a metallic lustre that gives life to it, and the female, unlike the female gold-crowned, has some touch, a reflection as it were, of her little lord's glory.

The cardinal grosbeak sang from the bough of a pin oak over the water. His song is less sweet, in contrast

with the increase of melodious spring notes, but his attitude is as poetic as the song sparrow's, with as much confidence, and with force that is lacking in the latter.

There's an old cherry tree, a beautiful one, by which I like to sit, for there is an association of childhood with these trees—such a one as this with gnarled boughs and cracked bark, as if the coating were grown too small for the swelling trunk.

I watch the swans on the lake. They are swimming about with curved necks, and with wings made like a cup to receive the sunshine, half opened like water lilies. They are moving within a narrow circle, turning with a swift stroke that sets their buoyant bodies rocking and the water rippling from under their breasts, just as boats anchored in conflicting currents swing about and are suddenly checked by the tightening of their moorings. They move with a proud but gentle dignity. I think there is no animal, except perhaps the larger feline types, that has so lofty an air. They became the sunshine; their beauty made it seem tender and caressing. As they approached the shore, their full-feathered forms seemed softer, firmer, more luminous, even, than human flesh.

I returned to the lake later in the day. It is strange how the change of season, and even a change of light, will alter the aspect of some familiar spot. The whole scene was new to me. The lake reflected the sky, and the swans floated like clouds upon it.

As I turned homeward, I heard the cardinal, and saw him a hundred yards away, on a hilltop, in the upper branches of a tree, a little black spot against the sunset,

while his song was in the air all about me. It is something like this—if whispered, it conveys some idea of the notes, the prefix pt almost silent, a hint for the arrangement of the lips: "Ptcheeōw, ptcheeōw, ptcheeow, ptcheeow, ptchew, tch-ōu." Its musical quality varies in respect of distance.

There are mares'-tails overhead, and the swans crossed the lake with beating wings and their bugle-like call. There will certainly be rain to-morrow.

Just before sunset the air was quiet; there was that hush and stillness through which we move involuntarily on the alert—the pause seemed to threaten.

We lose confidence when Nature ceases to smile and seems to brood; like children, we must hear her voice and feel the touch of her hands. The murmur and contact of the wind is a cure for loneliness. To be happy we must be continually reassured by some present manifestation, unless it be terrible in itself.

Hylas first heard, the night of the 18th, after a south wind.

May.

To-day is close and misty, although not by any means so warm as the preceding days of latter April, when the thermometer reached eighty-three or even eighty-six, I think.

About the 28th of April I noticed the horse-chestnuts out and the willows, and on the 30th the latter, along the lower lake, glittered like gauze, a delicate gold-green in the sunlight. That day also a certain western variety of

maple was out, both flower and leaf. The poplar buds were not yet burst and the aments were undeveloped, many of them scattered on the ground, cut off by the sparrows probably.

There was a great variety of bird notes, loud in the heavy atmosphere—the cheerful song of the robins, which if less common would be reckoned a beautiful song indeed, and the cardinal's loud alarm from a tree-top, where with some difficulty I traced and discovered him, radiant, facing the sun.

By the lake just before sunset, in the thick atmosphere that hung white and dense like milk on the horizon, I saw two swallows circling, dipping, and winging themselves away. The sight made me realize for the first time that this is the end and not the beginning of spring. It was the first intimation of summer.

Swallows are indelibly associated with all my thoughts of summer, notably with warm and quiet evenings—twilight time, which is the moment that memory best lays hold of.

Trees all out. Summer heat. Light on cut grass—blue in long grass, and again soon after cutting, with the severed blades horizontally on surface.

Wood thrush's song to other bird notes as Venus is to the lesser lights of heaven—brighter, with a ray of particular and exquisite color, and scintillant when other stars are dim. Velvet-topped robins—their cheerful notes. The scissors note of the grackle.

I heard a cardinal down by the lower lake, where

native birds are for the most part strangers, and saw him, a little spot of living crimson against the sky.

Another overcast and sultry day; wind from the east. The atmosphere of the Park is that of a vast hot-house, close, moist; and in the stirring air a pleasant chill.

Sweet summer scent—scattered cherry and syringa blossoms swept by; dogwood just appearing, and also lilac. The horse-chestnuts alone furnish an adequate shade and fill the eye gratefully, where the thinly covered twigs of other trees are open to the sultry air.

June.

To-day is warm, yet with the vital quality and the wind of summer. Certain walks in the Park lately open to the sun are now dark and cool, made remote and wandering by the mystery of the foliage. The air is full of odors, above all the delightful scent of mown grass. The oaks are beautiful in new and glistening greens. The cypresses show a close green fringe along the branches, and the Osage oranges are out. The magnolia blossoms are dead and dying, but the leaves are beautiful. The lilac is a departed delight.

Saw again a blackpoll warbler, and a wood thrush that hopped within twelve feet of where I sat watching him, and who several times gave utterance softly to his inimitable note: "Schēē-loo, chúrўll-éetz!"

The other morning early the nighthawks were singularly loud. Now and for several evenings past a sad wild sound, the quavering voices of frogs, can be heard

by the lesser ponds. It rings in the ears like an old, familiar, and melancholy song; as sad as autumn, it fills the mind with the same indefinable melancholy—the melancholy of sunset and of distant sounds.

An atalanta butterfly lit on my coat and hung there for some time as I walked along. I don't think I ever saw a butterfly more beautiful than this, with her glowing golden circle. The name in itself conveys beautiful suggestions: *"Cynthia atalanta"*—Cynthia, the sylvan goddess, and Atalanta, the maiden of nimble heels, swift but vacillating, the very type of the feminine mind—and the story is but half interpreted when her departures from the straight course are attributed to curiosity.

A lovely day; the Park crowded. Clear soft sky, and a summer wind in the trees. Little clouds on the western horizon, so saturated with sunshine that they seemed in themselves to be a source of light.

The distinctive quality of the wind in summer is that it blows fresh, as if from an unpolluted and distant source; there is something in it that brings suggestions of space, a free and limitless intimation. It seems to speak of the universal country, to blow over the round of the earth from below the horizon. To-day, as it rushes past, I think perhaps it may have risen in the Gulf, passed over the sandy stretches of Florida, and caught some of the dry sweet odors among the pine forests of Georgia. Wherever it travels, it collects and carries the sweetest and most healthful scents; foul and heavy odors follow feebly, and sink in the pure and rushing air. The damp-laden winds of spring seem in comparison lifeless and heavy—feeble local stirrings.

New Rochelle, New York,
June.

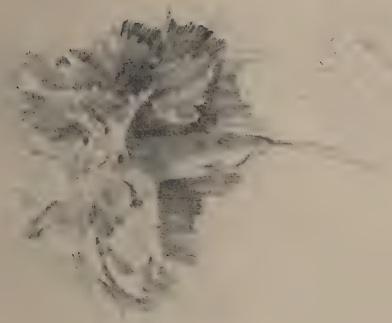
The beat of a steamer's paddles, loud and growing, but the steamer invisible. The answering fog-horns like bass notes in an organ, sometimes singularly musical.

Lilac sunset sky, green sea, same value; hot Oriental-like sunset, dense ragged cloud above burning waters; black stretches of shore.

Fog: Curious effect looking across the fog-hung water, following each faintly delineated ripple further out and out, until suddenly, the sight becoming confused, the distance is lost and the white wall closes in upon one. It is in some aspects terrible, to-day mysterious. Hollow voices and strange palpitations—a confusion of noises behind this dispersed and impenetrable veil.

To-night is the night of the full moon, which silvers the further side of the Sound and lies sparkling among the waves below my window. The lapping water makes a continuous accompaniment to terrestrial sounds. The crickets are shrill. A bat fluttered under the piazza to-night. The twittering of flying swallows; grackles on the shore at low tide.

Morning, 4.20. It is very light, although the sun is not yet risen above the haze that clothes the horizon—a purple mist that gives the water infinite width and mystery. The throbbing of a steamer comes loud over the glassy Sound. It is low tide, and the brown seaweed-hung rocks are singularly dark against the pale water



that is tinged with the faint colors of the sky, where float slender wreaths of vapor. There are two clam dredgers anchored just beyond the rocks. The notes of song sparrows are frequent; I can see them flying from tree to tree. The air is misty, the neighboring promontory is dim. The sun rises red through the trees with a dark and sanguinary glow—a sunrise that presages a hot day.

Last night the full moon rose, a large and pale magenta disk, hardly discernible on the horizon. The sea was of a leaden blue and the sky heavily overcast. At about a hand's breadth over the horizon the moon, then shining with a dull reddish light, like an enormous Japanese lantern, gradually disappeared behind a level line of cloud, a narrow but heavy band that cut through the circumference with a sharp and unshattered edge. She was thus diminished from three quarters to the half, from half to a quarter, growing shallower until she disappeared entirely and her dwindling reflection alike forsook the face of the Sound beneath. Later she shone with a strange effect of pallor, her face overspread with a thin greenish veil.

At five o'clock this morning the sun was hid in a bank of clouds. The water glassily still. Another hot day, I fear.

Last night was a night of eccentric gleams, of strange effects of illumination. The stars shone dim; a few were discernible in the loft of the sky. A falling star trailed a pale thread of light behind the clouds.

Rockets and other fireworks shot into the air from beyond the Point—a rain of golden fire that shook down behind the dark trees. Fireflies danced over the grass and in among the branches. Guns were fired from the yachts—a violent concussion in the air, a bursting detonation followed by a cavernous yawn, a vast and hollow sigh that seemed to pass slowly around the horizon.

Of the thunder, loud and near, a snapping noise, if such a term can be applied to so heavy a sound; also crashing, splintering noises and cannon-like detonations, so sudden and strange as hardly at the moment to suggest the source and nature of the sound, which brings an after-realization in the full and heavy rolling. Light on Sound after thunder-storm vivid green, shadowed surface dull purplish blue.

Beautiful sunsets here, and a vast expanse of sky for the swing of the constellations, not encroached upon by any swell of the land, which here lies flat; and southward the horizon is almost as level as the sea.

July.

Two days ago there was a storm from the southeast—a steady howling wind, so strong that this high room in the southeast corner, where I write, rocked in the gale. The spray was blown like salt over the rocks, and as far as the eye could go over the surface of the Sound whitecaps danced. The trees were tortured and tugged, "toused joint by joint"; they were shrill in protest. The wind howled at the corners of the house, a prolonged and inarticulate cry.

We built a fire in the parlor; it made us think of

autumn; it shone cheerily, it became the centre and gathering-point of the house. This building that had before been a shelter, a soulless tenement, became a home in virtue of that sacred flame. It was a delight to sit before the blaze and hear the troubled night yawn and ruffle about the house.

The next morning the vines on the porch were limp and withered, as if scorched by fire. The place was strewn with leaves and broken twigs. I walked down to the beach; it was cold and overcast.

Last evening it was warm; the sky full of stars, palely reflected in the Sound. Moths flew in at the open windows.

Clouds were rising in the west-northwest; the sky suddenly grew dark; the wind came up with a rush, and the house was all at once filled with wild and whistling noises. Without, there was a great moaning, and sudden cries swallowed up in the steady roar and the fierce hissing of the leaves. Crack and cranny began to pipe and whistle—the wind came through keyholes like a voice. The air was cold. The sound of thunder was muffled in the wind; lightning fell at long intervals.

This morning, wind from the same quarter, blowing steadily cold. Saw a kingfisher, and also swallows—their wonderful flight, so silent that though they sometimes passed within a few feet of my head, I could not hear their wings. What swallow is this, rough-winged or bank?

The wind has gone around to the north-northeast, and brings with it a fine misty rain.

I have been along the beach to Larchmont; coming back, I saw in an oak tree a male red-headed woodpecker—rare, Ridgway says, east of Hudson River.

Coming of a storm: Windy but pleasant afternoon. Wind (north?) blowing out from the shore; water placid, its surface wrinkled in the wind. Far away in the southeast a hollow sky of rain, rising and stealing eastward along the coast, obliterating the land point by point. A heavy leaden cloud arched like a hog's back, with the snout thrust into the southwestern sky, hangs above the empty waste, the gray hollow of the rain. The shadow of this cloud moves under it, yet the sails are still white in the sun, and gleam upon the dark, except that far in the distance, some already in the rain move like phantom ships on the horizon.

Looking away, the lead changes to bottle-green, and that to a dark blue line on the very edge, in which through the glass one can see white-caps dancing.

The wind comes suddenly; as it flies, the water darkles below and breaks into points and sparks of foam. It comes with a rush, and immediately there is a distant squeal and whistle in the air. The trees bend and hiss, dead leaves hid in the crevices of the rocks leap up, whirl giddily about, and away with a hop and a scurry.

A mist of rain lies over the dark water line of the horizon, which shows dimly through, and sails that scud upon it hang like a mirage. Boats run before the jib; a yacht passes under bare poles.

Rain begins to fall; the storm goes about, however, to the south, and presently streaks of brilliant green appear in the dark purple sea.

The sun is out again. It proves to be, however, but a temporary lull, for in a moment the east is dark, the winds blow, and the rain falls.

To-day warmer, pleasant, a sparkling sea. This morning some one of the family finds in the road a crippled specimen of the *Attacus polyphemus*. I have it now upon my table. It is drenched, beaten, and bedraggled by wind and rain, with one of its antennæ gone. As I set it down it quivers as if in a silent agony.

Warm and hazy day. Fleet of yachts like a game at quoits with clam shells, all inclined the same way, white and hollow, skimming the surface of the Sound.

Warm day. Passed over beach, and while there I saw hovering over the mill-pond a large bird which gave utterance to a hoarse discordant cry. I looked at it through the glass, and found it to be a heron. Its head and neck seemed to be of a dark maroon-brown, whitish in front, and wings and back a glossy blue. It must have been a little blue heron. It lit upon the marshy edge and fell hidden in the grass. I afterward saw two standing on a little island—the little blue heron as before, and one that seemed to me to be a green heron.

I crossed over the beach and struck into a narrow sunken lane running inland along the borders of the mill-pond. The grass rose high, brier roses showed their delicate petals along the banks, and Virginia creeper and poison ivy clung on the tree trunks. The meadow grasses mingled with white and yellow daisies

stretched to the right on a level with the eye, and above them hovered bobolinks shaking out their mad and merry jingles.

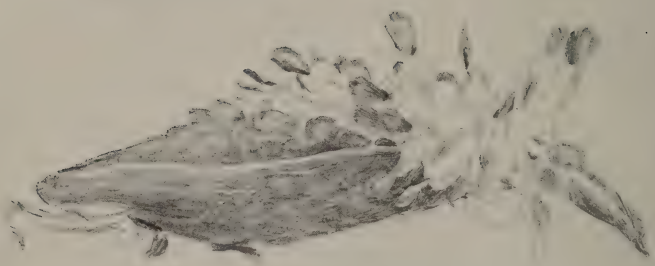
The trees that bordered the lane were cedar, sassafras (of which there were many shrubs), and wild black cherry, and among the boughs of the latter the bobolinks settled and swayed and sang.

Among the rocks on the eastern side of the beach were some small birds of the snipe kind.

The singing of the bugle from the fort several miles away came distinctly over the water, and last night at sunset, with a hollow sound.

Fireflies in the grass and the dark woody places. Bats, and earlier a large, apparently polyphemus moth, fluttering high, straight from the water and on across the mill-pond landward. Is it possible that it could have crossed the great width of the Sound from Long Island?

Stars seen dimly in the Sound, misty and lengthened reflections, silent palpitating echoes of crystalline lights, like exquisite notes of pure melody submitted to a lingering low interpretation.



VERMONT

STOWE, VERMONT,
October.

THIS is Sunday morning, and instead of going to Mr. Marshall's church I went to Mr. Lovejoy's cathedral. It is as beautiful as St. John's vision of heaven; its sides are hung and shingled with plates of gold. I pass in at one of the towering entrances, and find myself in the vast dim interior, with its noble piers of straight-grained basswood, rock maple, and painted beech; there are lighter columns of the yellow birch, gleaming like metal. Above are the bright and rustling draperies of the roof, green and golden; below is a soft and beautiful carpet that muffles my tread. There's a holy stillness here, broken by a faint whisper, the murmur of prayer.

At this time of year the little choristers are gone; and to-day the organist, who is the wind, is absent. What church in the world can boast of such a choir?—the summer warblers, the vireo and the catbird, the plaintive wood pewee, the cheery robin, the rose-breasted grosbeak and the blithe song sparrow, and all day long and late into the twilight the exquisite notes of the hermit thrush; and withal to hear that mysterious murmur of prayer whispered in the Gothic arches of the beech and maple, or finding a deeper and more solemn echo in the old coniferous Norman, the dark boughs of spruce or hemlock.

Wind from the north. Up to F.'s hill, and in the once dim and shady hollow, now opened to the light by the thinning trees, I found some white violets.

To-day the thermometer at about forty-two. Yesterday the apples were frozen on the trees and the vegetables in the ground; but undismayed, these delicate little flowers, whose native air is the soft spring winds, start like pale memories of summer up from the cold and leaf-littered ground.

Oh, these noble maples! They bear their golden burdens, their mantles of flame, with a constant heart. The butternut leaves are shed, and from the ground about them, from the fallen leaves, arises the nutty, almost rank scent, the most characteristic odor of autumn.

Beyond the ridge, facing the north wind, the Mountain is in mist; a fine snow is falling. The soft roar of the wind is in my ears, and borne shrilly upon it is the wild calling of jays from the dark copse of evergreen westward.

A song sparrow starts up from the shrivelled brake and flies silently away, and hides in the boughs of a little fir tree; later a flight of robins among the tree-tops, their voices cracked and feeble, their coloring dull and faded.

In the hollows the slight whisper of the grasses and ferns is distinctly audible.

Wind northwest. Bright sunny day. On F.'s hill, and beyond to my woody thrush-haunted walk, where in the boughs of some dim hemlocks I saw a Wilson thrush, I think. Mount Mansfield majestic and beautiful in so hoary a setting, and the Hogbacks with frosted ridges.

Yellow birch
Oct 30th Stowe
Vt

Sweet crisp air. Powder of the pollen rises on the wind at almost every step.

Later, drive; sky overcast, leaden, lowering; dun-colored mass over the white profile. Cold, cold—home with the west wind beating cold raindrops into our faces.

Rain, southwest wind. The trees and grasses seem to shiver in this cold wind, yet it is a congenial atmospherical manifestation. The chilly drops flatter the pale violets from the rich dark mould of woody hollows. The full and plumed ferns take sustenance from the moist air; it paints the boles of the velvet beeches, and passes with the breath of life through these cold northern woods.

Snow all the early part of the 8th. Went out at half past five; the fine hard frozen snow made a continuous hissing in the leaves. The sky was broken in the south. Across the dark covered bridge, and out where the shadow was like a tide along the muddy road; the snow on the grasses and fences.

The sun had set obscured by the clouds; it was a sad wintry twilight. On the crown of a little hill that commands a view of Mansfield there was nothing whatever to be seen of the Mountain, only masses of moving and trailing vapor. The roofs and plowed fields on the Sterling slope were all white. A leafless elm stood out against the leaden clouds. It was cheerless in the extreme, so strange and yet familiar, like a country in a dream. Far away I heard the baying of a house-dog; it carried with a hollow detonative sound across the cold

pastures. A bear was seen in this neighborhood not long ago.

Snow still falling. Drove in the morning to Moss Glen Falls. The plowed land, the roofs, the fences, and the bridges take the snow well; it melts on the open road. The woods and the pastures are silvered with it, and it falls so thickly that the mountains and all things not of the immediate neighborhood are shut completely out. The Falls are very full, owing to the late heavy rains. The mould in the hemlock wood has a thick coating of snow.

The beautiful delicate silver-green hemlocks! Their branches are outspread at the angle of admonition. There is complete silence here and on the shores of the mill-dam, except for the rush of the Fall. The water is higher than it was last summer. The little trees on the edge are doubtless dead; they stand leafless, and are reflected in the quiet mere. The moon-silvered roof in the hollow is now silvered with snow. I can barely see it through the falling flakes, and beyond, pale, like breaks in a cloud, the white pastures on the Hogback slope show dimly through the mist.

Coming home, we started a flock of bluebirds. They were brilliant in azure and cinnamon, their breasts as red as ever I saw robins'. They were lingering in the cornfields, where the glowing pumpkins showed their warm and cheering countenances in the stacks of gray and withered corn-stalks.

I have seen juncos and myrtle warblers by flocks. The country is fairly overflown by these latter.

The elms, ash trees, butternut, basswood in open spaces, and witch-hazel are mostly bereft of their leaves. The basswood in woods holds them well; they turn a dark purple-brown. The rock maple and beech are the most constant.

In the woods a new tint, the mauve, the pale purplish-brown hue of withered leaves, begins to show itself. The dark and rugged tops of the hemlocks stand conspicuous on the light glistening hillsides. Apple trees are brown and withered. The alders look frost-bitten and faded; the willows are still untouched.

The other morning (breaking clear before this overcast and dismal time) showed the higher ridges of the Hogback, where the snow still hung in the spruces, lifting silver spears, sharp frosty points, against the pale blue sky.

In the woods in the rain; the constant dripping is a melancholy accompaniment to my steps. Wreaths of mist hang like smoke in the sides of the Hogback range, which is mostly obscured, as are all the mountains, with heavy rolling vapors. The distant slopes are dark and desolate.

There are huge maples here, and basswood trees of great girth rising straight out of the confusion of branch and leaf, and beeches, the most beautiful, I think, I ever saw.

In one there is imprisoned the spirit of some hapless dryad. It droops sadly all to one side, its branches fall with a gentle and melancholy grace; the swelling trunk,

parting above, writhes upward in curves that could result only from such fervent and delicate despair.

Home by a hollow where rose the sweet smell of willows and alders.

Yesterday afternoon the wind veered to the northwest, and a patch of blue showed in the clouds. Toward evening the upper northern sky was free, and later, as I looked from the lighted parlor out on the night, a star shone and quivered in the dark space of the window.

Outside it was cold, and as clear as crystal, except southward, where the moon, something beyond half, mounted among thin lateral clouds. The distant mountains rose in dark waves against the sky. The solemn profile, white and ghostly in its snowy mask, blent into the pale starlit space. It was only in those far-away looks, those indirect and vanishing glimpses, that its outline was made manifest.

The stars scintillated with strange intensity. They seemed sometimes to vanish altogether; they glowed and paled like the pulse of heaven, beating with passionate fervor. The night was silent, except for the slight stir in the dark cloudy branches of the white pine before the house. A collie barked, and was answered from a distant farm-yard.

The willows in the valley are some bare and all brown and frost-nipped. The hillsides are light and cloudy with bare twigs.

Yesterday's snow-storm made evident the thinness of the foliage by marking out the boughs and trunks in lines of white, for the snow was driven level on a strong

southwest wind, that all the evening and the early part of the night hallooed and whistled about the house like a ghostly giant calling his stray dog.

Interiors must have seemed bright and pleasant to outsiders in the chilly dark, for to the inmates of a lighted room looking toward the black oblongs of the windows (for shades are a superfluity in these farmhouses) there was nothing of the outer world but darkness, and only a dim image of themselves to stare back blankly upon them. Yet the night was not dark; the moon was behind the clouds, and the dim forests and the white fields shone with a ghostly brightness.

Yesterday afternoon late, about six o'clock, I started two partridges on the edge of a wood. I entered by a dark congregation of hemlocks; and with beat and ruffle, and a numbing reverberation in the air, they rose one after the other and fluttered away among the snowy boughs.

This morning, in an open pasture, my horse's hoofs were balled with snow.

There are now whole hillsides of vaporous twigs, gray in the sun and purple in the shadow. The sun seems to bleach out this pale autumnal world. The orchards are brown, leaf and trunk.

It cleared during the day, and most western hillsides and pastures were free of snow.

I notice that the bluebird's call more nearly approaches the note of domestic fowls than any wild bird utterance, unless it be the crowing of the hoot owl. It is very like the cry of young turkeys.

Coming up the hill after our drive to-day, we faced

the cold north wind. The Hogback rose above us, white and unreal; the yellow slope, crowned by a little house, its surrounding lilac bushes, and a large white pine, looked strange against this glistening frosty ridge, that gleamed vividly in the afternoon sunlight with an almost golden sparkle, and, shining between the level pine boughs, made the tree and the dark house to stand out almost like silhouettes.

The sun set, and the ridge turned to a delicate metallic pink broken with innumerable blue shadows. Little rose-colored clouds were low over the glowing woods northwest, and the snowy top of Sterling was rose-tinted.

The sun sank lower, and the Hogback lost its color, which, concentrating on the Sterling pyramid, grew brighter; the delicate shoaling clouds were touched with pink and gold.

Later, only a clear pale amber space in the southwest, and in it, on the margin and the melting blue, the evening star shone, scintillating frostily. The dusky and shrunken clouds, low over Mansfield, were shredded with dull reddish streaks.

In the woods the ferns are faded and shrunk away to grayish skeletons thin as shadows, and show like a yellow dust among the dead leaves.

The lilacs around houses are still in leaf, but from a deep blue-green they have faded to a brighter if more yellowish color.

Brown ferns in the pastures, soft and feathery, more interesting than when green. Trees, wind-shaken, grow

thin and leafless almost as you gaze. They toss their arms and dance, like reckless prodigals shaking their thinning rags. Their glory has departed, the glory of gold and crimson, and soon they will stand cold and naked, all the deciduous company—straight lindens, rugged maples, and the soft-skinned beeches.

Though the night had every promise of a clear to-morrow, yet on waking I found the sky overcast. The wind had risen in the night; I heard it moaning at an early hour when it was still dark. It turned out to be a southwest wind, and brought a beautiful sky crossed with cirro-stratus clouds. Thin bluish veils lay behind the heavier masses, and detached purplish clouds swam in the milky spaces, and among all shone little lakes of blue ovals and of broken margin.

The mountain tops have a peculiar appearance. The strong west wind of yesterday cleared the ridges of the snow that rests on the eastern slope up to the line of wind-darkened spruces, so that the mountains, except Mansfield, where the snow lies flat upon the bare rock, seem to be darkly outlined.

The snow, "flaw-blown," comes over the valley from the Veiled Countenance like smoke. This morning there was a strong wind, hollow, thunderous. Now it is rising again, but earlier in the afternoon it died down and blew fitfully. Last night was a witches' meeting, a whirling dark vociferous night—the Stygian cave, full of lamenting voices.

In the afternoon in the south wood there was the

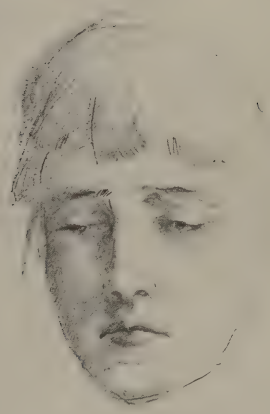
nutty odor of the fallen leaves. The wind searched the most secret places. The wood was bare and open, the breaking sky gleamed through the naked boughs.

They have cut down the larger trees and the wind has felled some; hemlocks and spruces, many, stripped of their bark and sawed into lengths, lie in the underbrush.

Down in an unused road, a swampy track where grew hickories and red maples, and where showed the soft dull green of little hemlocks. Down in the valley and along the Sterling slope lay long stretches of sunlight; the full river glistened.

The near trees stood dark against these pale pastures and dusky woods. The hills northward were dark blue, southward gray with snow; they seemed almost to melt into the dark and massive clouds that lay along their ridges. A faint, slightly rosy light at sunset.

This afternoon in the swampy hollow the wind passed with a deep and melancholy sigh among the nodding spruces.



FRAGMENTS

March.

EACH day has an individual beauty that convinces wholly; all differ, but each is perfect.

The sky was clear but for one fragment of cloud over Mansfield mountain. A broad rosy flush overspread the country, and in the sky behind the mountain tops northwestward a cold and metallic glimmer of the same color was evident, intensified on the horizon. The air very chill and fresh.

The charm of spring seems to me to lie in the marvellous delicacy of detail—the perfection of every flower, leaf, and blade of grass, the wonderful intricacy of the tree's anatomy made interesting by the budding life of the season.

The upland (plateau) farms—the beauty of fields: in them rather than in the wood, unless it be a wooded bit in the corner of a pasture, lies to me the principal beauty of the country.

As I passed through a sugar-wood in the still and quiet afternoon, the maples had a knowing air as of half-tamed creatures conscious of a power unshared by the wilder spirits of their kind—the wondering beeches,

birches, ashes, and elms—and seemed aware of the friendly office they perform, and to acquiesce, as well they may, since accident in the blood of them insures a certain protection, if not a care. The axe strikes thrice at their neighbors where once it injures them—the only trees held in any degree sacred in America.

Home by the new road. Before entering the wood on the south, a growth of yellow birches of various ages skirts the road for about an eighth of a mile. They grow on a steep bank, and the glistening gold of the trunks and larger boughs is shown against the pale reddish ground of dead leaves, and against lilac patches of snow. Bushes of young hemlock grow close to the road, and at this time and in this light shine of a most lively green. The surface of the drifts, rippled with blue and lilac shadows, contrasts delicately with the vivid tint.

At about six o'clock I went out to the crown of the little pasture, where a fire of brush had been kindled. It had smouldered to the coals, but on my raking together the charred ends, rekindled rapidly, and soon a bright blaze fluttered on the hill.

The weather had changed; the sun sank in a haze with but little color; a film of vapor overspread the sky. Deprived of the warm light and under so dead a sky, the mountains took on a solemn and brooding aspect.

The woods looked thick and misty; from their direction came the notes of the song sparrow. The moon was just risen, pale but nearly full, the rays spread on the mist in the form of a cross. Out of the east, as if

breathed from her cold surface, a chilly wind came steadily, making a stir and murmur in the evergreens, between which the fire glowed.

On the south, a black spruce; on the north, a little feathery hemlock; eastward, between me and the moon, twigs of the wild apple trees.

There was a pleasant mingling of the voices of fir and fire, strangely alike and subtly different—the soft roar of the flames, and the colder, more abrupt, and thinner voices of the trees; the fire soothing yet sinister, the trees thrilling yet kind.

Indeed, the fire, so seeming dead, laid hold with a hungry zest of the fragments I gathered; and now, on the windy side from which the flame is driven, the ash-coated coals dimple and seem to waver, whitening and glowing red—the play and the colors of a withheld quiet rage.

So marked was the appearance of a cross in the moon's halo, that to see it more clearly, beyond the interposition of the apple tree branches, I descended the little hill, passed through the hedge of cherry and young hard-wood trees on the edge of the plowed acre, and looked eastward. The purple brown of the plowing stretched from my feet beyond a whitish stretch of faded grass; then the broken line of a pasture, gray rock, stunted evergreens, and the reddish brown ridges of fern brakes; beyond that a sugar-wood, cloudy reddish purple, and finally the mountain-side, streaked with the white glimmer of snow among the tree trunks.

Returning, at the base of the incline I could see the wavering flames over the furrow of the pasture, but no

other evidence of the fire, nor indeed of smoke, for the mistiness of the air tended to disguise it, and it was carried low by the level wind. There only, like a magical display, on the apex of the little hill danced these fiery tongues.

To-day the wind of March, big and blustering. The dun and purple country, spotted with glittering drifts, rolls away to the blue wall of spruce-forested mountains. Heavy clouds overtop them, and the meeting of the cloud-shadow and mountain-side is a purple hollow, a violet cave, a band of deep and vivid color.

In the wood the trees sway and roar. Volumes of fragrant steam burst from the windows of the sugar-house. The atmosphere inside has a mild yet heavy sweetness, the smell of the boiling maple sap, as peculiar as the flavor, as delectable, as bland. It is as individual a sweet as honey, for there lurks in both a quality like a reminiscence of their sources; its flavor on the tongue conveys more than a mere sense of sweetness—it is a hint of saccharine secrets known to the bee, the fly, and such ephemeral creatures—too slight for our perception, too fine for our obtaining, too subtle for our blunt powers of differentiation, and at last ours only by craft and violence, the exercise of ignoble forces. The maple is perhaps the more delicate sweet of the two; it has not the cloying and bitter after-taste of honey.

A furnace of brick and stone stands in the centre of the sugar-house. The sap hisses and surges in the pan, curling in a tawny wave from the seams; at the upper end a heater is set. The steam rolls and eddies around

the small building, and bursts wildly from the open windows, pursued by gusts of wind.

It was growing toward sunset; sombre orange tints showed in the clouds. John threw open the door and drew in an armful of fagots. He unhooked the damper of sheet iron (for door the furnace had none), and, as he thrust in the wood, the red firelight glowed on his face and as much of his figure as was visible. Behind his head the low-hanging boughs (for the sugar-house stands on the very edge of the wood) swayed in the wind; pale leaves fluttered up against the deep purple clouds that overspread the sky. Beyond was the rim of the meadow, half bleached grass, half a dead white drift, and beyond that, again, the far-away country northward, the sapphire distance.

The wind roared, the sparks danced around the little hut, and, the door being closed, the picture lost the strange background—its leap into the north twenty miles as the bird flies. In all that region and throughout the range of the sugar maple, on every square of two hundred acres or so a similar scene is being enacted, on a large or a small scale—from the double evaporators that boil the sap of fifteen hundred to two thousand trees, through varying degrees in the size and capacity of pans, even to the humble potash kettle of the old order of things.

The wind lessened toward evening; for an hour between six and seven it was still.

The moon rode clear when about one third of the way across the sky. A night like faded daylight, like a landscape darkened by time or neglect—so pale the

country, and the clouds, clustering over the mountains, white and fleecy.

Soon the wind recommenced, blustered and trampled. The air was cold; I could see the stars wink in the rifts on the horizon.

So on into the pasture and to the edge of the wood, where the boughs swayed and rustled in the wind and the leaves danced in the pale moonlight, for there was a net of clouds over the sky, and the full moon looked small and faint, and a vast rainbow circled like a wheel about her.

I called, but there was only the murmuring whisper and flutter of the leaves. Again I call, and a low whinny answers; so soft the turf that I do not hear the hollow beat of hoof until I see the mare close upon me, large against the moonlight. Her head is raised, her eyes affrayed with doubtful tremor and wonder, her nostrils dilated, her ears pricked forward, and, clearly outlined on the sky, she comes at a fast swinging walk, her mane fanned out on the wind. The colt leaps and ambles close at her side. The sound of my voice speaking her name reassures her; she pauses for an instant, arches her head, and lightly feels the palm of my hand with her lips; then, resuming her walk, she passes swiftly by, the colt still close at her flank, and is lost to sight in the uncertain moonlight—though the ear may follow her by an emphatic sneeze or the sound of cropping.

July.

From the dark swamp came the devil music of the veery, whining, thrilling, the bitter-sweet of sound,

harsh and dulcet—the truant dryad of that shadowy grove.

August.

The sunset glowed and died, fading out and growing gray and cold like a dying coal. The mountains seemed removed in space and sympathy; they seemed to brood, and their thoughts were foreign to the hopes and fears of animate Nature.

Summit of Mount Mansfield. Silence supreme. Faint distant sound of wind in the trees, none to be seen moving. Sounds as clear as rock shadows.

Day hot. Drove towards Smugglers' Notch, but turned eastward to what is called the Platform. The Mountain valley soft and hazy. This latter part of August a time for gathering grain—this is a peculiar charm. Up, up a long hill wooded on either side—young birch, some beeches and young maples. On the road, higher, looking across to Mansfield, the atmospheric conditions almost perfect—perfect for the moment. A hazy light; the excessive altitudes of the Mountain faint—a great shadow looming on the evening sky, but, lower, the southeastern spur distinctly seen. The roof of a house catching the light; a yellow marking of the wheat-field boundaries. Some trees tinged with an especially marked individuality, and, indeed, a general feeling of all trees.

Lower lay the valley with the sawmill, and, like a wall on the southwest, the straight ridge of the Nebraska mountains. A house in a clearing, high, remote—an eye, a watch upon the mountain solitudes. In the im-

mediate foreground a wheat-field, in which a man and (presumably) his two sons are at work. The wheat is in sheaves mostly; a small ripening spot uncut. As we passed, they left work and came over into the road, the gleaming scythe on the man's shoulder, the boys hanging on his steps.

The view from the knoll which we ascended—a wide and comprehensive gaze about the whole horizon. The Hogback mountains to the southeast, and successive blue hills and vacancies of hidden valleys between. Tall woods to the northeast, and, over all, an added shade of mystery, the sun having virtually set in the haze. A red light behind Mansfield, and little silver fragments, high above, tinged brilliantly—light and feathery these. In the west a little southward, ill-defined and heavily shadowed, cloud shapes rising on the twilight.

Over the Platform drive, a plunge into the darkening woods. The light through the leaves—at the foot of a long hill, looking upward, the road narrowing toward the apex, reaching between two trees that stand soft and feathery in the twilight air. They, as all objects at the distance now, seem to be beheld through some denser medium; the outlines are indistinct, yet the color is enhanced at the expense of an arbitrary exactness of form—or feature rather than form. A medium this, pure and liquid, like a refinement of the purest aqueous distillation—the atmosphere of Art and Dreamland.

Turning into a grass-grown road and passing a barred gate, we came into a perfect wild. A desolate barren sheep-pasture on the one hand, topped by the distant and faint outlines of the Hogback mountains; before

us, to the south, a wood of maples; westward, the great profile, towered by those dark fantastic cloud-shadows defined on a dying glow of daylight. On in the deep cart-tracks, into the shadow of the wood. Between the branches, faint, far, mysterious, that pale glimmering shone indistinctly. The trees reared great trunks high above us—forest trees. The incline was downward still, and the flat lay of leaves from the young boughs of sapling beeches was observable on our way, almost in our faces. Through a quiet farm-yard, disturbing a peaceable gathering of cows, and still down again into deeper shadow. So, out into the valley mists, and home.

Looking up at the night-gathering sky, between the branches of trees, a star, perhaps, twinkling on one's gaze in a mysterious manner, as if one's contemplation had power to summon that returning glimmer out of the sky.

December.

Thin clouds over the face of the new moon: like a changing expression, they pass over it without obscuring its light, but, being passed, it seems to smile.

Looking at Hogback, deserted by the afterglow—the solemnity of the mountains after sunset. The glimmer of icy ridge divided from the pale green sky by a line of hair-like delicacy, in value occasionally identical, only the faint definition of color remains—below, pale lilac; above, pale green.

[Sky] yellow, changing to clear metallic pink—cold and colder—curious tinge! Mountains clearly outlined, con-

struction defined, snow marking crevices and gorges—bringing the bulk nearer and throwing summit into remote regions of sunset; differing in this so much from mysteries of autumn and summer also—wherein a dead blue wall.

Every man who owns horses, unless brutishness overwhelms him—for not the worst among mortals is denied absolute dominion of these sensitive creatures—almost every owner, then, inflates his own impression of his horse's powers in the manner of the Dauphin's vaunting before the battle of Agincourt: he sees his horse in a slight haze of poetic self-sufficiency. The flattery is almost personal, so intimate is the connection in vanity between horse and rider, or horse and driver, though this is but a modern and local instance.

The Peruvians thought De Soto and the mounted Spaniards one with their horses.

In a shapeless hat and a parti-colored coat, of which the original black has faded to harmonious greens and yellows, frayed at the seams, ragged at the cuffs, I can lay claim to as little personal vanity in my appearance as a man may. I can endure to ride in a mud-coated cart; the harness even may be poor and dirty; but my mare's coat must shine like satin—a straw clinging in mane or tail would become a reproach and burden on the spirit. Vanity is playing see-saw on the dashboard to such a degree as converts those instances of humility into a source of pride by very contrast, and I find myself happy to be a foil to my horse, so subtle is this reciprocity.

A speech of Tilly, the veteran of the Thirty Years'

War, is recorded, that a bright polished weapon is best set off by a ragged coat.

The little canary had a fit yesterday. Suddenly it fell from its perch and lay upon its back in the centre of the cage, its wings partially extended, its tail turned in and up at a slight angle, and its claws drawn to the side and closed—in a word, the attitude of a dead bird. Yet its eyes winked brightly, though I fancied they appeared darker and wore an expression of suffering. It did not suggest the effects of a physical ailment, but the bird seemed like some creature spent with emotion.

There is something awful in the presence of a dead *wild* animal. I remember the young fox just killed and still warm that H. brought to show me. There was no blood upon it; I fancy it had been strangled. The eyes were partly opened, the pupil was widely expanded and showed dark and suffused. The expression was awfully intelligent, at once sly and pathetic. It produced in the observer a singular suspicion of death counterfeited. One expected some swift change in the eye, some sudden movement toward escape; but still it lay unstirred, its brush drooping, its nimble feet passively extended, and with the mocking gleam in its cunning eye.

Of the chicken hawk that H. shot last May—its stern and unrepentant glance, the anger of its eye, unquenched by death, staring a mute but bitter protest against men's tyranny.

It is almost a year since there hung in my stable the skin of a raccoon. It was a fine specimen, and perfect

but that it lacked one fore foot, which, however, did not injure the value of the fur. The slayer, who had spent his Sunday wandering in the woods with expectations raised nothing above partridge or rabbit, was not a little proud of his achievement; and a wave of something like envy disturbed the stolid satisfaction with which less fortunate sportsmen regarded the trophy, for the raccoon is no longer common in this country.

To me the bloody pelt possessed a strong and painful interest, and the missing foot told a story of wrong and tyranny, with force and eloquence beyond what pen can set on paper and my faltering efforts ever hope to shadow.

The raccoon was found asleep in the cleft of a hollow tree, on a bed of leaves. The slayer approached softly, and took a sure and close aim at the eye, in order not to mar the pelt. It appeared strange, the cunning creature, that he should have chosen this tree with the open cleft, for the entrance to the raccoon's hole is usually placed high enough to avoid the allied dangers that walk on two or run on four feet. But the clawless stump threw light on the wonder: with but three feet, he was no longer able to climb his tree, so made his bed at its foot, and fell the easier prey, and the sportsman had in this instance to acknowledge the good offices of the trap.

Of a frosty November night one sees the glow in the windows of the farmhouse that speaks of an atmosphere within, a tranquil social time, a gathering for some ease after the strain of the day's work, for shelter, comfort, repose. And yet the same cold moonlight that glimmers

on the roof sees a dark something stir in the close shrubs and grasses of the swamp, something that seems to imply an abortive activity, to writhe, but without progress.

It is the struggle between the insensate trap and the mink, fox, or raccoon on whose flesh its fangs are set. Either exhaustion follows, and subsequent death at the hands of the trapper—who will visit the spot at dawn, or two or three days hence—or an escape by means compared with which the sacrifice of Scævola's right hand was a slight essay of stoicism. Then, in a dreadfully imposed silence, the captive creature with its sharp teeth desperately rends its own flesh, and even gnaws and crushes its own bones—and is free.

Such tragedies transpire in the darkness of wood and swamp, unrecorded, unheeded. Scævola won the approbation of all succeeding time that he suffered the deprivation of his hand as a pledge of fidelity to his principles; but I never heard it recorded as a heroism in mink or raccoon that with his own teeth he severed flesh and sinew because he loved freedom and his natural rights. Indeed, the scientific have averred that in such cases of voluntary dismemberment the suffering is slight.

Of those who speak thus lightly of pain and wrong, soothing the disturbed and doubting conscience and giving countenance to the evil, . . . they are paid in such coin as those thirty pieces, of which a man's strength could not endure the weight, heavy with innocent blood.

I wonder, and I fail to see, by what right man imposes so much misery upon his fellow creatures. Is it

not a strange arrogance, a conviction that the ability and power to do wrong justify the doing?

It is held that all this suffering and desolation is a necessary part of the march of civilization; but I find the glib expounders and patrons of this civilization something too rank—it is the weed and not the flower that flourishes best in the soil of to-day. For my part, I think it is no such great matter, and I indeed could find it in my heart to condemn it utterly, if it destroys the innocent and holds no life sacred save that which stirs under its own skin. If civilization does not progress beyond this, it is worse than nothing.

This is a subject that is in the mouths of many, and yet little has been written upon it, however well these cultivators of thought may have progressed with it: for those who would urge against it shrink in diffidence, suspecting a want of logic in their position. But what is genuinely and deeply felt is alone worthy of expression, and let this, and a hope that I may not be so far illogical as to hurt the cause of those dumb kinsfolk I would fain aid, be my encouragement and my excuse.

It seems as if all this misery could not die, as if some power now perchance uncreated, biding its time, still heard and noted; and to the imaginative mind dwelling on such thoughts, the great natural sounds, the tones of those forces that, aroused, are inimical to man, ever in the wailing and gusty throat of the wind speak with an angry sorrow for the mute and unheeded sufferers: for surely they sympathize with the simple and the suffering, and not with the usurper, treasuring up the wrong the

more that its note of suffering was so small, remembering those brief and bitter cries.

The misery that human pride causes! If the horse might choose, would he not change places with the humble sheep, the meek sheep, the ox? Perhaps not; perhaps he values that spirit, that heart of fire, that inspiration, to be willing to accept the suffering it entails. The hand of man is heavy on all alike. Who does not know the strained and anxious expression of the deep and beautiful eye of the overwrought ox, the sole symptom and protest against his bitter usage—that eye of calm and peaceful beauty, of golden lights and purple shades, of the quality of a mountain brook, its sky reflections and its warm shallows? Whosoever quenches the mild light of that eye and clouds it with the dry and glassy stare of a mute misery—what shall be said of him? It were better that a millstone were hung about his neck and he were cast into the sea.

All wrong is essentially the same, though differentiated so far as to be known under different names; but above all among these manifold forms of wickedness God hates cruelty.

It was not of man alone that the pitiful Christ spoke that solemn judgment: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Responsibility does not end where humanity ends, but extends even to "the meanest thing that feels."

What is pity? It is the realization of another's sorrow, the most unselfish of the emotions, for it awakes the keenest pain on another's account; whereas the other emotions, if impersonal, awake pleasure, satisfaction, friendship, and love—a response pleasing. It is less personal, less selfish, the most divine, as being a relation beyond the individual—a wide sympathy. It is partly an impatience of wrong and suffering, partly the realization of it.

What did Christ, what did Joan of Arc feel? Love and pity; but in both cases was it not pity that prompted action? "I have a great pity for the fair realm of France."

Wherein is the human heart and mind a superior power? To endure with the better courage pain and suffering.

What a chasm between the life of the poor or of the earnest and that of the pleasure-seekers—the large class of slightly cultured, pleasure-loving people whose culture goes to nothing beyond the novel, whose pleasure is of all that appeals not too forcibly to the senses—those who live in an atmosphere of flutter susceptibility; those whom toil or care has not hardened to make the recognition of beauty perfunctory; those who have never felt the thorny point of bare distress. They have no conception of a real tragedy of the soul; they are happy. But it is a poor, selfish, and narrow form; still, 'tis the modern tendency, the end of this civilization.

They dance, dine, seek out their amusements in a

direction between the good and the bad: for they must not feel the tightening of either extreme. All flows calmly, smoothly—"sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights."

They know nothing of the bitterness of a struggle, the poor man's for life, or the earnest man's for truth. They are like inhabitants of different planets.

One may endure to accept the devoted care of another, if the least hope of repayment lives to light the future—a repayment not so much in regard to the individual, but in respect to a larger requital, some accomplishment worthy of pains and of waiting. But if both the one and the other hope be dead—of repayment in kind and the repayment of a good work—then the object of living ceases. The life of the aided is meaningless to himself, useless to the world. . . . There's a great possibility for all alike in the power of dying bravely.

Courage: for instance, it must have been a terrible experience on Round Top at Gettysburg when Pickett's veterans marched through death and slaughter to the mouths of the Federal guns—more terrible for the Federals than for their intrepid opponents. At that moment the souls of the Union men must have needed some loftier impulse than the fierce courage of battle to sustain their cruel purpose. Nothing but implicit and unquestioning trust in the rectitude of their cause could have nerved those men to hurl their murderous fire against the defenseless breasts of the advancing column.

Life seems the more sacred in proportion to its fragility and brevity: the more ethereal the essence, the more precious. It seems as if that little minute should sparkle with delight: to spend that little sadly were too long.

What is a realist? One who cannot see further into the truth than to confound the accidental with the essential. Truth is beauty, and the artist who is capable of recording those elements of essential truth and omitting the elements of accident achieves the beautiful.

Query: What is accident, and what essential truth? How to be known, and how distinguished, the one from the other? By innate perception, by observation, and a deep familiarity with the subject treated—a familiarity gained by *living* under the conditions that allow of knowing, not by second-hand or forced acquaintance. An artist must therefore live the life he records. Those that deal with subjects classical, imaginative, dramatic, must appeal to the inner senses; but what so well stimulates that power, guides and aids it, as the living of a fixed and earnest life?

. . . Here is much the same idea as in Stevenson's passage: "The young demand happiness as a right; the old humbly ask to be spared intolerable pain."* So the young, in the fresh powers of untried hearts, are venturesome to tempt the pains and pangs of fiery emotions, which the old shrink from, either having suffered too

* "Age asks with timidity to be spared intolerable pain; youth, taking fortune by the beard, demands joy like a right."—*The Dynamiter.*

keenly, with old wounds of heart or conscience to cover, or from weariness of spirit.

Introduction to an Unfinished Story, "Hollywood"

"Death pays all debts" is an affirmation; it has the currency of such sayings, an unscanned acceptance, and not to admit it is to deny the powers of heredity and example. Yet, like all popular aphorisms, it contains truth, and is not unallowed of poetic justice, for the human heart inclines to speak for the dead, who lie at a silent disadvantage. As the wise look tolerantly upon the present, so the common mind contemplates the past with pity and without anger. The dead walk uncensured through dark paths and in a shadow of sin: for, from the calm standpoint that distance gives, they appear scarcely free agents, and their concluded fortunes are touched with urgent pathos.

It may be said with some truth that the writer who takes his theme from this atmosphere receives an adventitious aid, the more if he deals with fact, for it has already become romance: characters and scenes are made pictures, framed in charitable retrospect.

On this hope let me rest my story, for its actors have been dumb and quiescent for more than a quarter of a century—one in a land grave, one as deep as men sink in the sea, and one in seclusion as close as death.

How some pieces of music—those pieces that A—— used to play—bring her back again! The remembrance of her sweet eyes, "Stars, stars"—and now they are dark and shrouded!

Her vibrant voice, her clear and open glance, the curves of her passionless lips, the sparkling, golden mass of her hair, her supple body and delicate white hands are all dead—cold, cold, and lifeless. How strange she must have looked being dead—how drawn her face—how old and sorrowful!

Her spirit lives in those melodies of Beethoven and Schumann and in the songs of Liszt.

Ah, those chill winter evenings, when, shut in the warm draped room, sweet with the odor of flowers—the delicate scent of Marshal Niel roses that were her favorites—sitting silent, perhaps, before the bright wood fire, from time to time turning, in silent comment, her pale blue eyes with their rims of thick white lashes; or, more often, at the piano, her tapering fingers pressed upon the keys, and her voice filling the room!

A——, the simple-hearted, the nobly serious, whose life was a protest against the vanity and folly of this modern world. As she appeared then, bright in the glow of those swift and happy nights, or, sweetly pensive, in the sad winter twilight: so do I see her now as I listen to these heavenly sounds. Yes, it is all embalmed in the melody of her voice that still rings in "Wo bist du" and "Die Lorelei." How much more sweetly does the music of her soul float in among the discords of life! It is in other ears than mine, heard by those that never knew the strains of her voice—by unborn generations: so sings

her soul, shining like a star in this muddy world. If there is any Heaven—other than the Heaven of Good Deeds, of which she is the brightest angel—surely she is a partaker of its joys.

Pan's Pipes

So time speaks of the decay of the old order, for truly the halls of Valhalla and Olympus are dusty and neglected. Yet, are they dead in spirit, or is it but the old form that has passed away?

Oh, skies, Olympus, now a garret full of broken toys! Desolate Olympus! There lie the mouldering goblets, the bowl that rosy-fingered Hebe bore about the magic circle; Ceres' horn of plenty, too small a matter to typify the vast agricultural realization of to-day; Apollo's lyre, its all too simple music unstrung and silent—these dusty relics—also Mercury's caduceus and Pan's pipes. What of the cunning serpents?

If centuries so different in purpose should strangely exhibit a still conscious life, and a wandering gust by chance whisper a note on the long-silenced reed, would it not breathe thus?—

The pipes: That wind came fresh from the forest, methinks, and carried with it a scent like the lindens in July,* the drone of bumble and honey bees, and the little pipe of the many tiny winged things.

The serpents: What note is that? Of the old half-

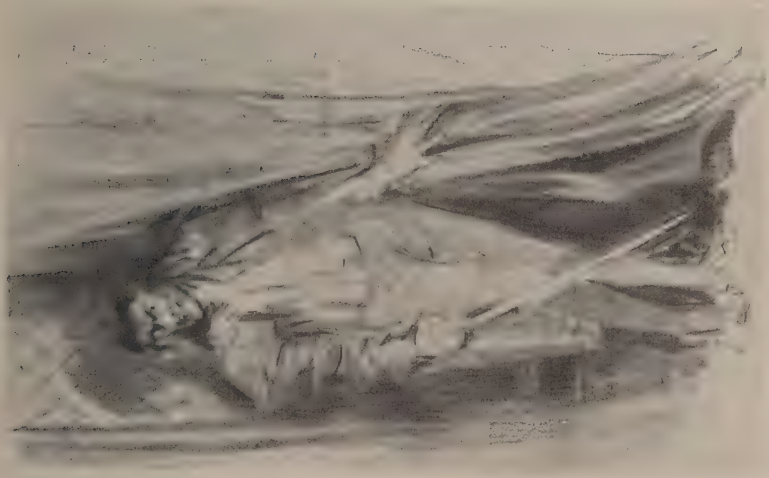
* The air blew from trees at vast distance, even from northern Vermont perchance: for there the basswood or linden flowers in July, though in most temperate countries a month earlier. [Author's note.]

beast piper? Truly, we thought of all this faded company his pipes would be the last to sound.

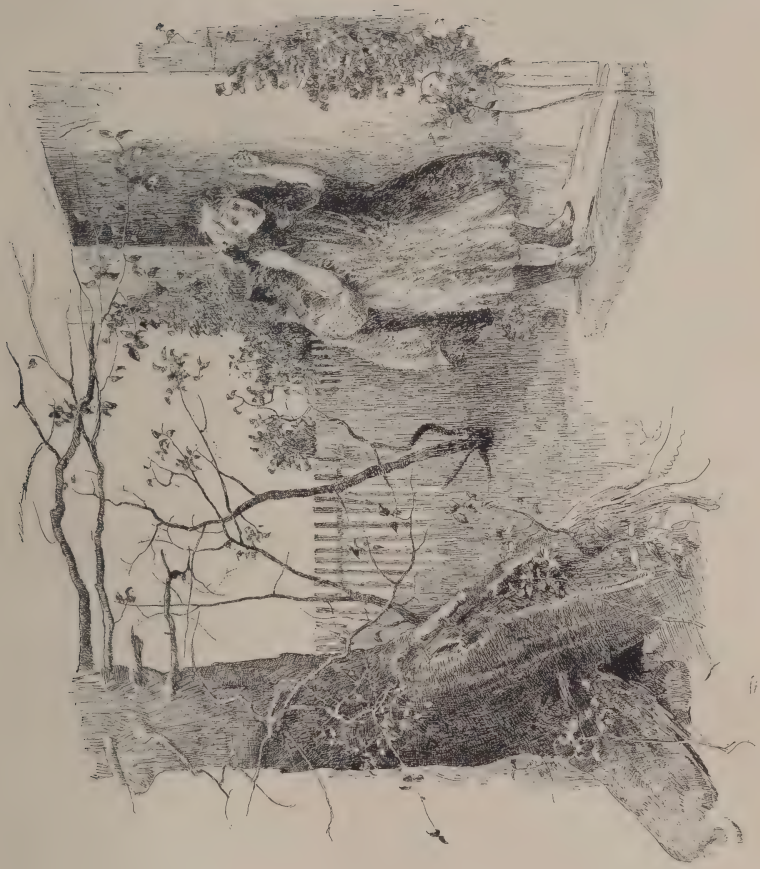
The pipes: Once the half-god spoke for more than half the world, and blithely. Is he dumb, yet not dead? He lives still in secrecy and suffering; he dwells in silence terribly imposed. 'Tis better so; for if it were broken, a cry of agony would rise, so bitter, so piercing, that neither gods nor men might endure to hear it.

The serpents: So is it ever with the simple nature, while it fares well with the wise or the cunning. Mercury carries all; Mars is his slave; Minerva and Apollo stoop to him; he is the Jove of the new Olympus.

PENCIL AND PEN-AND-INK DRAWINGS



FOR FLORENCE



EXTRACTS
FROM LETTERS
1882–1896

Old Orchard in Nantucket

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

TO HIS MOTHER

NANTUCKET, August 5, 1882.

Nantucket I really like; there is a great deal that is attractive about it; but when in your description of the sunset at Mohonk you spoke of the tall pine trees, the absolute lack of such scenery all summer struck me quite forcibly.

The other night we had a most magnificent effect here—the aurora. Imagine a mass of dark clouds lying upon the horizon, and from behind them shafts of light stretching up to the centre of the sky, the stars shining in them—that was how it looked at first, but in a little while the whole northern sky was pulsating like an enormous fire.

This town is really very quaint. I am at work (in the afternoon) upon a study of some old houses I see from my window. In the mornings I paint in a most delightful old orchard, where the trees are quite marvellously twisted and old.

I grow more certain every day that the mountains are to me much more delightful than the seaside.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, July 9, 1887.

We were driven home by a thunder-cloud of tremendous and threatening aspect, and caught the first drops

as we crossed the road to the hotel piazza. It was quite a storm—a deluge of water, and a wind of great force that blew the rain like clouds of smoke over the ridge-poles of the barns and houses.

We chanced upon a peculiarly comical episode in the course of our walk. Entering the long covered bridge we have to pass (you know the one, of course) in order to reach your hill, we noticed two men at the further end, busily employed with a brush, a pail, and a great roll of papers, seemingly engaged in the art of poster-sticking. We then perceived that over the old advertisements of the Barnum London Circus, etc., new and startlingly brilliant bills were judiciously pasted, setting forth the "Aggregation of Cabalistic Wonders—Taylor the Wizard King," with portrait—a kind of imitation Hermann, with a curly red imperial and distinctly waxed mustaches, arrayed in a dress suit with diamond cross and shirt-buttons, and made yet more resplendent by numerous and sparkling orders. "The King," so the bill continued, "assisted by the Distinguished Artist, Mlle. Irena—Mlle. Irena in her great European Success," wherein she was depicted, in complete Eastern costume, floating airily over the heads of a distinguished, awe-inspired, and (presumably) European audience. There was yet another bill, descriptive of a second attraction—this a conjurer—representing him (pictorially) revealing the wonders of *his* art.

After such a preparation as the above, imagine our feelings when, on reaching the further end of the bridge, we discovered in the person of one of the bill-posters the Wizard King himself. His dress coat was removed, but

otherwise he stood before us in all respects the brilliant personage of his advertisement; the low-cut vest and polished boots, the diamond cross and buttons, the flashing orders, the red imperial and mustaches, waxed to the last possible extreme, were all clearly revealed to our astonished gaze. Happening incidentally to glance at the other poster of bills, we thought we could detect, under a shabby tile and a general air of vagabondage, a strong likeness to the conjurer before mentioned. It is needless to remark that we looked with considerable interest for Mlle. Irena.

By the way, I shall hope to write you again on the subject of the Wizard King; we propose to make inquiries as regards the character of his show, and, if possible, see it. He has been running in my head all the evening; I can't help but wonder whether his professional is his only dress—if he wears a duster in the course of his travels, or always goes about, as we beheld him, wasting himself in the vulgar glare of the day.

TO HIS SISTER

New York, November 19, 1887.

You asked me to write you about the "Faust" show, but M. has probably sent you full particulars. However, in accordance with my promise, I shall say a word or two on the subject.

We were all on hand; the family circle shone with familiar faces. There were the B.'s and the Joblights and the Jumblies, whose hands in the course of the evening assumed their original coloring; and as the per-

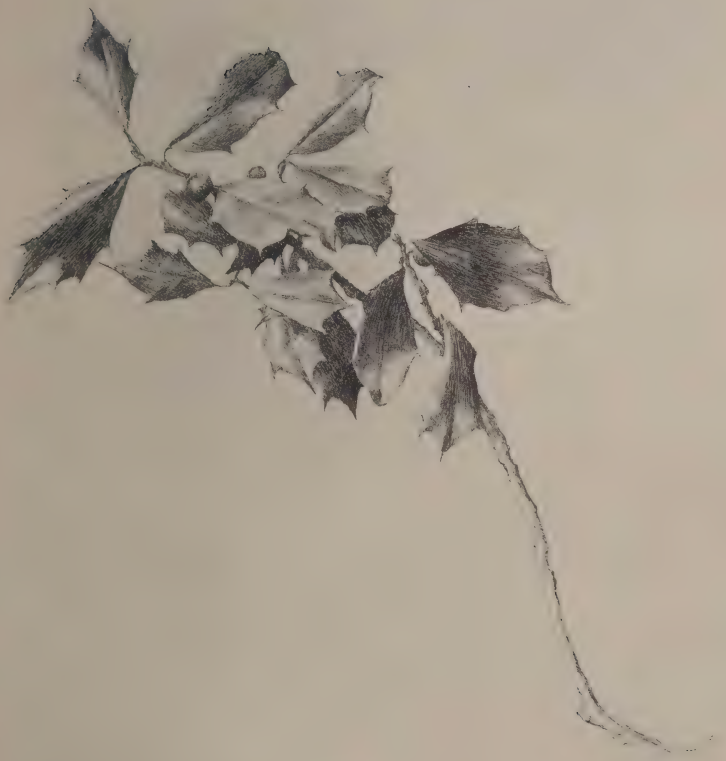
formance drew to a close and Mr. Irving came before the curtain to deliver his little speech, the gunpowder was distinctly observed to run out at the heels of their boots—at least there arose such a dust in the vicinity of Joseph, resulting from the combined and vigorous action of his heels and umbrella, that certain proud intruders, unknown to the gods, begged that he would give vent to his enthusiasm in some less violent manner.

I believe it would be impossible to speak too highly of Miss Terry's acting just here. Throughout the piece she seems to me to act more carefully, with greater earnestness and continuity, than ever before.

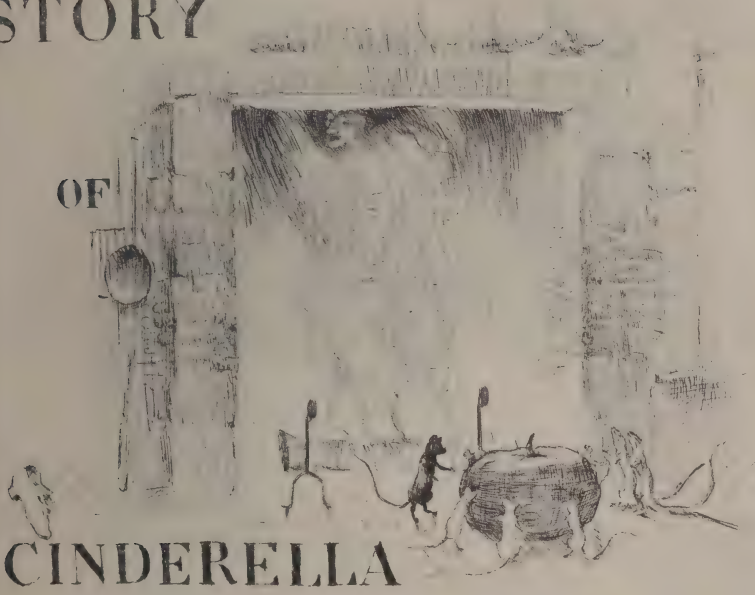
The only fault to be found with the stage management is that it may be, perhaps, a little too complex. Mr. Irving carries out his theories bravely. The stage is two thirds of the time in an unusual gloom, and there is a bold and lavish use of music. The curtain never falls until the end, darkness favoring the changing of the scenes, that seem to melt one into another. The intention is, I suppose, to convey the idea of a dream.

I don't know that I ever entertained any notions respecting the devil; it's a little hard to criticise anybody's Mephistopheles, and far be it from me to attempt the like with Mr. Irving's. He is very picturesque, and certainly a figure that remains vividly in mind. He is perhaps a little inadequate at moments that require great force, as, for instance, when he reminds Faust that he has to do with the devil. You would delight, I feel sure, in all the scenes with Martha. His costume and make-up are admirable; his face has what Hawthorne calls, in

A MERRY CHRISTMAS



THE STORY OF CINDERELLA



CINDERELLA HEARS THE CLOCK STRIKE TWELVE.

speaking of the dead Judge Pyncheon, "a swarthy pallor."

I have now, to begin with, a little drawing of a rose, with "For Dorothea" printed in Roman capitals; likewise, upon the succeeding page, engrossed "The Story of Cinderella," with all the properties drawed off: the fairy godmother taking flight up the kitchen chimney, and on the hearth, dancing in a circle about the pumpkin, the rat, the two lizards, and the six white mice. The little shoe also occurs in a corner of the page. On one sheet there are three small pictures—of the conjuring, the proclamation, and the trying on. Also four full-page pictures—of the Prince on horseback, the marriage, and Cinderella before the footlights, taking her call; lastly, the children's supper on their return from the play. As soon as I can get some holly I shall draw a wreath with a "Merry Christmas" printed inside, as a frontispiece.

I have had it in mind to draw off Bluebeard in pen and ink. It would be much more interesting to do than Cinderella—it is so much more dramatic; though, for that matter, what could be better than the situation of the clock striking twelve, in the ball-room scene of the latter?

TO HIS SISTER

New York, April 2, 1888.

I don't know if I have already told you, or not, that I went to Brooklyn, to one John Arkhurst, and purchased two beautiful specimens of luna moths, male and female. I have had in mind for some time to paint a picture, a

moonlight scene, the lot back of the hotel at Stowe, and a luna moth with outspread wings risen into the moonlight from behind a little bush of witch-hazel that grows there—last summer hung with white morning-glories that on nights of middle moons were open and generally full of dew. It is only by regarding my moths as models that I can justify myself in the possession of them. The extra luna and a large and beautiful *Attacus polyphemus* still weigh heavily upon my conscience.

I have time and time again sat down with my pen in my hand on purpose to write you all about Robert, but I find I have nothing to say on the subject. I was too excited on the Claudio night to take away a very clear impression of him, but I know that it was more than good. The speech about death, as he says it, is, according to Madame Modjeska, pathetic. I think it was more than pathetic—it seemed to bring the idea terribly near; I'm sure most people in the theatre were strangely touched.

TO JOE EVANS

New York, January 22, 1889.

Robert's Orlando was beautiful in parts. In the penitential speech, "If ever you have sat at good men's feasts, If ever," etc., he touched the deepest note of feeling that was sounded that night. I never heard the lines so well spoken; I wondered if there were not something deeper and more serious in them than in any others that occur in the play. Madame's remark on his Claudio I thought applied well to him as he said those lines.

TO HIS SISTER

CAMDEN, S. C., April 11, 1889.

To-day, although there is a pleasant breeze, it is hot in the sun, and looking south, as we do from this piazza, comparatively near objects are indistinct in a hot white haze. The most delightful and wonderful music of mockingbirds is continually ringing in our ears; they never seem to cease singing from sunrise to sunset, even when flying. They are noisy in this garden, of which the comparatively unkept condition seems to offer them peculiar advantages. There is an alley of holly and mock-oranges, very dense, at the foot of the garden, leading a distance of about a hundred yards to the road, and here they throng, singing, fluttering, and alighting among the leaves, with their white-tipped wings and tail outspread fan-like, in exactly the attitude of Mr. Audubon's beautiful drawing.

The country is now in a charming state, the light spring greens filling out with solid forms, and contrasting with the dark pines.

The day before yesterday we drove out to an old place called "Mulberry," lately the property of a General Chestnut, and built by his family in 1820. It is the best instance of a swell Southern home I have ever seen, a very large brick building of colonial style—*i.e.*, piazza in front with very beautiful Doric columns, and a wide sweep of stone steps. It lies in rather low ground, near a swamp, about three miles from Camden. The way to it is a most indifferent country road, running through an

almost houseless wilderness. There are a few negro cabins in its vicinity, but otherwise it stands alone. I can't get over the strangeness of this; it would not be so odd if there were not all the evidences of a new and apparently unopened country, the seamy side and the ragged ends exceedingly visible in a bad road, charred clearings, and miserable huts, and, at the end of all, a truly grand old mansion, stranded as inconsequently as a glacial boulder.

The grounds, even at this early spring stage of foliage, are a little gloomy. The house is set in the midst of a level park of water and willow oaks, some of considerable size, a few live oaks, some hickory and holly trees, and dogwood and crab-apple, both now in bloom.

It is said that the present owner, for the sake of a few square rods of cotton, cut down a long succession of beautiful old crab-apple trees that lined one side of the avenue that leads to the road.

Until yesterday I did n't know that clouds could appear in this sky, which till that time had remained an unbroken cloudless expanse. In this flat land the sky seems a thousand times greater than it does in the mountains; I was never in any place where I felt the world to be so large. Camden itself seems to stretch out interminably; it is a country of infinite perspective. The straight roads, lined with cloudy trees that grow bluer and bluer, stretch away until all the lines converge and meet on the horizon.

The sky fades from a very deep blue at the apex to a cloudy pink, against which are the dark green pines and the delicate emerald tints of the water oaks.

Twilight shuts in rather sadly; there is often a great deal of smoke in the air, and toward dusk things become dim and ghostly. After sunset the air is very lively with bird notes—mockingbirds, sparrows, and the little tufted titmice; and when these are quiet there is a loud whizzing of insects, a ringing of tree toads, and a very far-off hollow chant of frogs. Little Brer Rabbits hop silently into the garden and begin nibbling the stalks, and bats (little red bats) flutter around the piazza.

From time to time in the course of the evening, when everything is quiet, the mockingbirds break out into short and most unexpected bursts of song.

Very odd people turn up here occasionally. The other day a man of eccentric appearance, with one fixed and one roving eye, came apparently in quest of a ghost. He made inquiries about all the old houses in the neighborhood, in the hope that they might be haunted, and when he heard that "Mulberry," the place I told you of, was said to be frequented by a ghostly lady in gray, he tried to persuade old Jim, the black butler, to go down there with him and spend the night, and asked him in the event of encountering the spirit what he would do—"Run, or stand and address it?" I believe Jim said he should run.

I have been trying to read "Richard Feverel," but I don't seem to get on very fast, or with much enjoyment. I like the admirable choice of words, and I am impressed continually with its cleverness; but the story is explained, rather than told, in too lofty a manner, with words and phrases in capitals—too Charles-Reade-like for my taste.

TO HIS SISTER

Hot Springs, N. C., May 8, 1889.

By the way, I *did* think of something the other day, which I dare say has been thought and said often before, but is to me a new idea—to you, I suppose, old. It is this: that the first two lines of Shelley's "Skylark" (I was repeating it to myself) sound his false note:

"Hail to thee, blithe *spirit!*
Bird thou *never wert.*"

This is contrary to Matthew Arnold's definition of poetry, is it not? "Noble thoughts applied to life." If Wordsworth had been the writer, he would have taken pleasure (would he not?) to allow the skylark a bird, and not a spirit.

TO JOE EVANS

Stowe, October 26, 1889.

I am almost afraid you will not be able to come to see me when you get home, because this climate is excessively cold, and requires a kind of Corin outfit, sheepskin leggings and such. I have lately been investigating the winter costume of these regions, and I find it is something like this.

It is beginning to get cold already; snow has been hanging on the Mountain since the last of September, and we have had a very respectable snow-storm in the valley.

I enjoyed your letter exceedingly. I feel almost culpably provincial, hearing of these bits of news from for-

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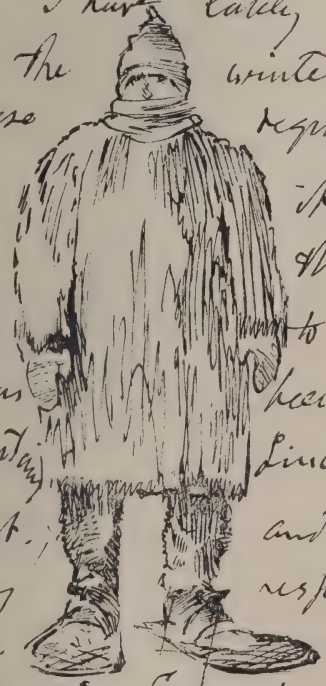
the Mountains since the last
of Sept., and we have had
a very respectable snow
storm in the Valley.
There is some hope of my going
to New York at Christmas, which



eign climes and (as Mr. Stevenson has it) the Modern Bagdad.

The putting of H. Christian Andersen's "Snow Queen" into a little operetta does greatly tickle my fancy; I should have liked exceedingly to see it.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, November 18, 1889.

I could tell you of a delightful wintry drive we took yesterday, over snowy and frozen roads, away up into Nebraska Notch, which seems so remote and wild in this cold season—the trees on the hillsides standing against a background of snow; the bare rocky surfaces and all the lesser brooks and springs ice-coated; the cattle huddled in the farm-yards; the farmers in knitted nightcaps, buffalo coats, and sheepskin leggings. To-day has been warm; much of the snow is melted.

I am going to move a little kerosene stove into my painting hut, for my hands get so stiff it is almost impossible to paint. My picture gets on marvellously slowly. I have been shifting my traps about to take in several varieties of evergreens, and I expect to call the picture "Hemlock-Spruce, Spruce, Fir, and Pine." Do you think this too funny? It is to be a kind of botanical study.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, November 30, 1889.

This morning the thermometer was at 17°; but as there was no wind, and as the sun shone, the air was almost summer-like.

We have spent most of the afternoon riding about on the ox-sleigh—to the upper barn for straw, to the woods for fire-wood. This last expedition we made about sunset. You can imagine how beautiful it was: a red glow behind the trees, and long blue shadows, a tinge of pink on Sterling and the mountains northward.

The Canadian with the red nightcap informed us that he had known it here as cold as 44° below zero. The part of Canada he came from, however, was colder, he thought. He went on to extol the benefit of open air; he said he was poorly as a child, from five to fifteen was "recruiting up," at his sixteenth year took to wood-chopping, and ever since had been "as tough as a b'ar."

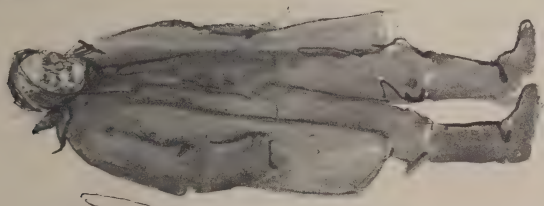
TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, December 7, 1889.

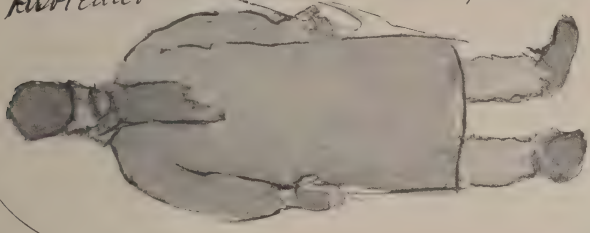
The other day I rode down to the village on the wood sledge. It was rather fun. Although we had a chain on the runners to serve as a brake, the horses were pushed along at quite a lively pace, bucking and kicking in their endeavors to hold back the load. We went to the grist-mill for some corn meal, and stopped also at Mr. Straw's to encourage him to finish the windows. Everybody had on the most delightful costumes. There was one old man at the mill in an old sealskin cap and a coonskin coat, who was a very lovely specimen. Mr. Lovejoy (who runs the mill) came out to speak to Mr. Cobb, his rubicund countenance done up in a blue checked handkerchief.

delightful costumes. There was one old man at the mill, in an old deal skin cap and a Coon Skin coat, who was a very Comic Specimen. Mr. Lovell who runs the mill came out to speak

to Mr. Cobb



his partner and companion during a



the chicken hunting.
Love to all
Yours sincerely

Mr. Lovell, Mr. Cobb, two Comic Characters

Mr. Lovell, the little old gentleman in the Coon Skin Coat

Mr. Lovell, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Cobb's partner, Companions, on the Sandbanks & the Sea.

December 8.

I take the keenest delight in Hans Christian his book. I feel it is what one ought never to be without; as essential, almost, as Shakespeare.

There is a little flock of blue jays continually around the grain house, tapping at the walls like woodpeckers, until the indignant squirrels burst out of the cracks and crannies and disperse them.

This morning I went into the sugar-wood and sketched for an hour. The air was warm and balmy, very spring-like, the mountains in a haze. The snow in the wood was crossed and recrossed by the prints of squirrels' feet.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, December 9, 1889.

By the way, if you want an uncanny set of verses, something in the style of those you sent me, why don't you read "The Lykewake Dirge," or death-watch dirge, in William Allingham's "Ballad Book"? For so simple a ditty, it seems to possess considerable hair-lifting powers. Perhaps it may not affect you so; you ought to be sitting alone at night in a farmhouse, the other inmates having gone to bed and the wind whistling and moaning outside, properly to appreciate it.

I like to hear about little things like your encounter in the car. That is the kind of thing that makes a city so attractive, and New York the most so of any. Being in New York is like having a free ticket to a Chinese theatre, to a kind of drama that has no ending.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, December 27, 1889.

Forgive me, Joe, that I have not answered your letter before. God knows I am not greatly pressed for time, nor am I likely to add much to my answer by letting it linger a week or so. The fact is, country people live on very generous terms with time; all their deeds, letters included, are characterized by a liberal margin, though not on paper.

TO HIS MOTHER

WORCESTER, MASS., January 3, 1890.

It is now endeavoring to snow; the changeableness of the weather is tiresome. Excepting the first week in December, we have had no real winter weather—it has been either April thaws or windy, dry, frozen March days. There has been very little of the charm of winter. I am not prepared to define the charm, but I think it has much to do with snow, and large snowflakes.

TO HIS SISTER

WORCESTER, January, 1890.

I am under a painful compulsion to send you the verses* on the opposite page. I have been twisting and turning of them inside out ever since I left Stowe. Considering their intrinsic weight, they have sat very heavy on my soul. It is like employing a religious expert to

* "The North Countrie." (Printed on page 335.)

lay a ghost, to get somebody to read your vexed verses—they cease to writhe, they no longer prey on your feelings.

These, I need hardly say, fail to express my feeling, though they may convey a shadow of it. I feel as if I might sometime write something like a poem on this theme—a presumptuous statement, but I feel it—the theme—as a great inspiration.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, March 6, 1890.

On the 10th of February, I think, we had a severe snow-storm. When I looked out of my window in the morning and saw our next neighbor driving his ox-sledge through the drifts, I wished for you to see and appreciate so savage a picture of Winter. He had on his sheepskin leggings, a long blue homespun blouse or kaftan or something, belted in at the waist, his face and cap tied up in a red muffler, his mustache and eyebrows perfectly white. He came striding through the snow, sinking in above his knees at every other step, shaking his long whip-lash over the struggling oxen, the wind making smoke of the snow—as in Schreyer's pictures.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, March 12, 1890.

I spent this morning in the sugar-woods watching the oxen hauling logs, which is really rather exciting. There is a popular notion that the ox is a slow, stately,

and rather dull animal. If you could see them springing over fallen trees, pushing their way through underbrush, sliding down steep icy slopes, plunging full depth in bogs, always extricating themselves with nimbleness and dispatch, you would change your preconceived ideas and regard them as particularly spry and intelligent creatures. Notwithstanding all their cleverness, the poor things end every day with cut and bleeding knees. It is terrible to see animals so remorselessly driven; but you can hardly wonder at it when you see what herculean tasks the men themselves perform.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, March 22, 1890.

Sugaring began this afternoon. I have just now (about one p.m.) come down from the woods, where they are still collecting sap. Since this morning they have collected four tubs full (vats about three feet high and ten feet in circumference), and had not quite finished. The sap ran freely; the pails on some of the trees tapped this morning were full to the brim.

This being a warmish day, the snow that came last night on a north wind adheres to the branches in so great a degree that the woods seem to have burst into white foliage. Nothing is left uncovered but the trunks and some of the larger boughs; the rest is cloudy white, as dense as spring foliage. There's a prospect of more snow; but the occasional gleams of sunlight this morning have much diminished the beautiful effects.

March 25.

I saw Henry sugar off about eighty pounds of maple sugar yesterday. It may be interesting to you to know the process.

The syrup drawn off from the evaporators is put in a large pan, set over a fire, and boiled for about an hour and a half. The means of ascertaining when it is done sufficiently is amusing, I think. They have a little twig of birch bent in a loop, and when on blowing through it, after dipping it in the syrup, the sugar flies out in little filmy strips like shavings, they swing the pan off the fire by means of chains and a pulley fastened to the ceiling, and allow the contents to cool. While it is still in a gluey, half-melted condition, they pour it into the cans—and there you are! While the syrup is boiling, it seems to be the custom to scrape off the warm sugar that candies on the side of the pan and devour the same, which is very good. Everybody goes provided with little paddles whittled out of basswood.

To-day is most dismal—chilly and gray, and the roads frozen up again. But we have had beautiful nights, cold and starry.

TO HIS MOTHER

Stowe, April 25, 1890.

Yesterday afternoon I drove up the Sterling brook road to the sawmill. You can imagine nothing more charming. The road is for the most part good, being sandy, and in the bad places repaired with cart-loads of sawdust and shingle by the lavish lumbermen. Although

the deciduous trees were leafless of course, the green mosses and the extraordinary greenness of the spruces made an effect delightfully summerish. But I was pained to see a mountain of spruce logs at the mill, and masses of sawed timber piled as high as the roof; they seem to be doing the business on a gigantic scale, and I should imagine will in no great space of time clear Sterling as bare of spruces as Elmore or the Mountain.

I went up the road that we couldn't pass when we were last there, you remember, on account of the drifts. There was still a little snow on north slopes, but plows were cutting into the gray field along the windy ridges, and the whole country was ringing with the piping of spring frogs.

April 27.

Last night we had a heavy fall of snow, from two to three inches, and to-day everything is white, under a leaden sky. The jays, that have not been seen for two weeks past, are screaming and doing the gentlemen of Japan act outside the front windows. However, the thermometer is nearly up to 40°, so that this wintry relapse will be but brief.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, May 1, 1890.

I have about half finished a picture of a hemlock-spruce that I am very anxious for you to see. How I wish Thayer might cast an eagle eye upon it; how I wish I could drop into his studio to warm my thin blood in the glow of genius!

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, May 5, 1890.

This morning was cold (45°) and cloudy (it has since cleared beautifully), so I devoted it to a long walk through the Pilgrims and the west pasture. I found (as I wrote you) yellow and white violets, and, though I don't know whether this will be interesting, I saw a black-throated green warbler. I found Sammy chained up in the stable (he had been chasing hens with intent to slay) and howling like a dervish. I took him out walking with me, and he was very obedient—and is certainly the handsomest dog I ever saw. Still, he's but a poor hand at driving cows. As Henry says, "He's played too much." Cows at this time of year, getting out after such a long confinement, are rather difficult to manage, a difficulty augmented by the fact of the frost having thrown the fences in some places, and Henry and Arthur are driven to the extremity of despair, running and shouting, while Sammy, I regret to say, only adds to the confusion.

I drove down to the graveyard yesterday to have a look at the birds, that I knew must be there (a sheltered spot) if anywhere. You can't imagine how charming it was; the effects from the valley, where the grass is greener and contrasts very vividly with the purple woods and blue mountains, are more interesting just now than from higher places. There were myrtle warblers, a large variety of sparrows, swifts, bank swallows, I think, and, to be heard, blackbirds and thrushes.

I see the apple trees in the yard are whitening very slightly—the buds becoming a little evident.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, May 14, 1890.

This afternoon it is raining, but I put on my rubber boots and a mackintosh and have been walking in the west pasture and the Pilgrims. The south slope of the pasture is covered with white violets; in the wood the blue predominate.

In Gray's "Botany" frequently occurs the description of locality, "rich damp woods, northward." It very adequately describes the Pilgrims and others hereabout, where every boulder, root, and north side of bole and limb is coated with moss—in the beeches ranging from blue to yellow and bronze, and in all, in this moist spring weather, vividly bright.

This morning, out driving, I had a glimpse of orioles and several kinds of warblers. Blackbirds, robins, warblers, song and tree sparrows, and thrushes are all singing now, probably at their best; the song sparrows not quite so musically as in April, and bluebirds heard not at all. This may be accident; I don't know. I have been listening to the hermit thrushes to-day in the swamp. They seem to choose the silent times of other birds to sing their songs. In reality, I think they are very constant singers: they speak deliberately, at long intervals, but almost all day long. They can be heard later than most, and at noon of hot days when others are silent.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, May 16, 1890.

The flowers of the June-berry shrubs are very delicate, and make interesting points on roadsides.

For a wonder, yesterday afternoon was clear, and after dinner I walked a little way toward the Governor's wood. There was a slight haze, the mountains soft and cloudy in spring foliage, and open places, pastures, and meadow of a bright emerald green. The trees all begin to have some body; the beeches are the greenest, the maples pale pink, lilac, and gold, aspens conspicuously yellow-green. Thrushes were singing in such numbers as to injure the effect.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, December 21, 1890.

Last night, after reading Ibsen's "Ghosts," I was strongly tempted to put the book in the fire; the fact that it was not my property alone restrained me. Yet it is almost interesting in its signal intemperance, so aimless and misdirected an attack upon society. Will the prefacers (a silly tribe) insist in this case, as they do respecting the "Doll's House," that there are only two positions tenable to the reader—entire acceptance of or declared warfare with the views of the writer? It would be instructive to see what they had to say in this instance. I fancy it would trouble them to define exactly the nature of Ibsen's protestantism in "Ghosts." It

appears to me as little better than a meaningless display of ugliness, which, far from answering any good end, is, in my mind, precisely the reverse of moral. To put this ugliness in the form of a play is what I particularly resent. To pursue the good and insist upon it is morality in art; and this, I think, can be more widely applied to life also. "Let all evil sleep," says, wisely and gently, the woman in Tennyson's "Sea Dreams." I don't believe that any denunciation of evil is so powerful for good as an appeal to goodness.

As soon as one begins to think a little, ideas that are older than the pyramids, and that have been presented to the sightless eye and the deaf ear in many forms, suddenly strike one with the force of an original conception. What I have said just now is trite, doubtless, but not to me.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, December 27, 1890.

I never saw the atmosphere so clear as it was Christmas night; there was not the least haze on the horizon, so that the moon (the full moon, I believe) rose without the least warning conveyed in a diffusion of light or halo-like effect, perfectly round and sharply outlined like a gold circle on a blue ground, and glittering as bright as a new gold dollar. In the same way later the night was quite remarkable. On ordinary moonlight nights a whitish haze will blend with the outline of the mountains and make them indistinct, but Christmas night Mansfield was as sharply outlined, almost, as on a clear day.

The woods have a most mysterious, Hop-o'-my-thumb forest appearance, the trunks and limbs on the outer edge heavily snow-coated, and the interior of dim and general grayness. The gable ends of houses and barns appear like haystacks, and the dormer windows and chimneys the most inconsequent things in nature.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, January 4, 1891.

Last night I received a note from C., stating that he had found a pleasant country home for Samo. I am both glad and sorry. I shall miss him exceedingly. He is, to my mind, the most interesting dog of our collection and admirably suited to this place. I mean that his nature is in accord with the spirit of the place, which is one that combines a certain wild charm with interests of a domestic sort. Samo is gentle, obedient, and is, "as one should say, one that takes upon him to be a dog indeed," but nevertheless, he has an interest apart from the common interests attaching to dogs; he has something, though in a slight degree, of the virtue of a wild animal.

January 5.

But now I must tell you about our trip to the mountains. Saturday morning was clear, with a very faint northeast wind; the thermometer was at about zero. As we expected to find the road somewhat difficult, Mr. Cobb borrowed a light sledge, and this he filled with straw, a canvas covering and buffalo robes on top of all. They put us up a lunch basket, and we carried some

steaks and potatoes to be cooked at the camp. H. and I put on 'most everything we could find in the way of wraps, and what we could not wear we carried. We presented a decidedly Tweedledum-and-Tweedledee-like appearance. We got off at about half past eleven.

The road southeast of us, by Wilkins' farm (the grassy road), was entirely blocked by drifts, so we took a winding course through the pastures to the Hollow. After passing the mill we met a couple of lumber teams just below Warren's farm, that last clearing that we see from the valley, and it was not until we passed this almost drift-hidden house that we struck into the woods. They are nowhere very dense on these Worcester mountains, but we met with some fine maples and yellow birches, until we reached an altitude above the range of the former, where the evergreens became more numerous, spruces mostly, and slender tapering firs. And in the openings we saw ahead of us the glistening ridge of the mountain, heavily frosted by clouds condensing and freezing over night. You can imagine the delightful nature of the drive through this winter forest, where abandoned lumber roads wound with smooth unbroken surfaces and prolonged the glimpses from our road, which occasionally dipped to the crossing of small ravines on corduroy bridges. At about half past one we reached the camp. The house where the lumbermen sleep and have their meals is not particularly interesting, but I found the log barn decidedly picturesque.

The house is kept by "Charlie Burt's nigger" and his wife, a white woman. It's neat and cleanly, but a somewhat primitive abode, consisting of a single room which

Dinner was ready for us in the camp
half an hour or so, and was a
very admirable one and highly appreciated.
Immediately after we harnessed the horses
and drove up into the woods, where the
cutters
wood choppers were at work we
went up the mountain in a north-
easterly direction for about two
miles through a region
that was like fairy land
where the evergreens
were so densely coated
with frost that hardly
any suggestion of green
remained to them.
I don't mean that the
boughs were snow laden
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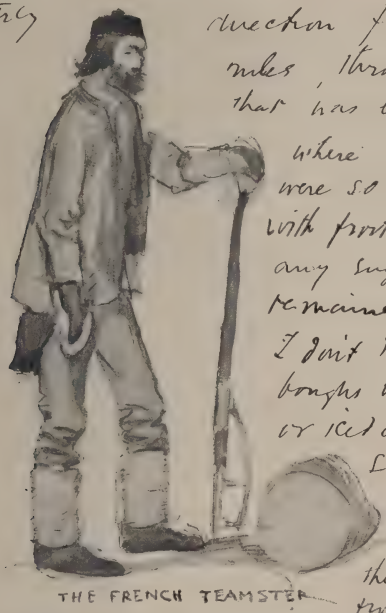
way the birches seemed to bear a
delicate wintry foliage. The lower
part of these trees in a cold shadow the
tops in the golden afternoon light —



THE FRENCH TEAMSTER

is at once kitchen, sitting-room, dining-hall, and sleeping-apartment. A storeroom and woodshed open out of it, and there's a loft overhead where the lumbermen sleep. Mr. Cobb set to work at once to cook our dinner, and meantime H. and I strolled about outside. There was no wind, and you can hardly conceive of the extreme quiet. Presently in the distance the shouting of teamsters and the crack of whips would be heard, then the jingle of harness, the creaking of the heavily loaded sledges, and the sound of the runners in the snow, and for a short space the camp would present an animated scene, in the loading of sledges with lumber for the mill or the unloading of logs brought down from the mountain. The men were exceedingly interesting to look at, in particular a Frenchman of a Mephistophelian cast, of whom I have made a little sketch.

Dinner was ready for us in the course of half an hour or so, and was a very admirable one and highly appreciated.

Immediately after, we harnessed the horses and drove up into the woods, where the wood-cutters were at work. We went up the mountain in a northeasterly direction for about two miles, through a region that was like Fairyland, where the evergreens were so densely coated with frost that hardly any suggestion of green remained to them. I don't mean that the boughs were snow-laden or iced over, as you sometimes see them, but the entire surface of the tree, boughs, twigs, and needles, was covered with minute feathery crystals that sparkled like silver. In the same way, the birches seemed to bear a delicate wintry foliage—the lower parts of these trees

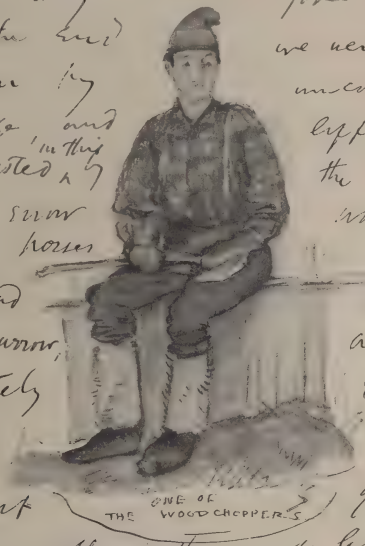
in a cold shadow, the tops in the golden afternoon light. At a little distance the firs and spruces seemed to be glittering pinnacles of ice. We had some little difficulty in reaching the actual scene of the wood-cutting, as the road had only the day before been broken out by a yoke of oxen, and in the end we were compelled to turn, by uncoupling the sledge and lifting it around, assisted in this by the lumbermen, as the snow was too deep for the horses to leave the road, and the track too narrow and barred by a lately fallen tree.

The choppers were about quitting work, so we offered them a lift back. They were very interesting—young fellows of about eighteen to twenty-five, the very picture of health and robustiousness. Some of them sat on the end of the sled, from time to time answering our questions, but mostly conversing together in low tones; others followed on foot, their axes slung over their shoulders. In front of us a yoke of small Jersey cattle dragged a large log of canoe birch (for fire-wood), and occasionally created a diversion by endeavoring to crowd each other out of the road. Their driver walked with them. In this order we wound slowly down in the shadow, for the sun had by this time set and left a deep red glow behind the ragged spruce tops.

Passing places where a tree had been felled and the severed boughs trampled, the smell of the crushed leaves was very strong and fragrant.

On returning we did not stop, but continued directly down the mountain. The last glimpse of the camp was an interesting picture—horses, oxen, and men grouped between the log barn and the little shanty; the bright

at a little distance the firs and spruces seemed to be glittering pinnacles of ice. We had some little difficulty in reaching the actual scene of the wood cutting as the road had only the day before been broken out by a yoke of oxen, and as the sled passed by we were compelled to uncouple the sledge, and lifting it around, assisted the lumber men, as the snow was two deep for the horses to clear the road and the track to narrow, and barred by a Lately fallen tree. The choppers were about quitting work, So we offered them a lift back. They were very interesting, a young fellow of about 18 to 25, the very picture of health and robustiousness. Some of them sat on the end of the sled, from time to time answering our questions, but mostly conversing together in low tones, others followed on foot, their axes slung over their shoulders. In front of us a yoke of small jersey cattle, dressed a



ONE OF THE WOOD CHOPPERS

colors of flannel shirts and toques conspicuous on the snow; the light gleaming on the axe-heads; the movement, bustle, and color against the background of the cold and darkening wood.

The stars were out before we reached the valley, but with the wind at our backs the air seemed like that of a balmy summer night. On our way through the Hollow and homeward we were boarded from time to time by lantern-bearing strangers, with whom we exchanged a civil greeting or remark on the weather. When we reached home, we were surprised to find that the temperature had risen slightly a few degrees, for when we turned northward and faced the wind, we imagined some phenomenal fall, so icy was it.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, January 8, 1891.

Let me tell you here about the chestnut devil, as you term him. He will be seven years old next spring; he stands fifteen and three quarters hands high; he is, so far as Mr. Cobb and I know, perfectly sound; and although lately he has displayed considerable vivacity, he is, I believe, of a gentle disposition. In color he is a dark chestnut, fading to a gold color around the pasterns, black hoofs, and with no white hairs anywhere except a somewhat indistinct star in his forehead. His legs are very clean, and he has on most occasions a fine spirited air. He is rather long-bodied, but not ungracefully so. As you know, he is not much of a trotter, but Mr. Cobb calls him a good roadster, a stalwart animal that can take

a carriage along at a reasonable pace for long distances without tiring. In motion he keeps his back steady, his legs moving rather rapidly, his neck arched, displaying a good crest, and his head tossing up and down, while his ears, like a good roadster's, are continually in motion. He carries his tail well also, it seems to me, not arched, but straight, somewhat flagged. He was an excellent fast walker when I got him, and I fancy he is so still. One trick he has that strikes me as rather interesting than otherwise, a way of wrinkling his nose like the horse in Albert Durer's "Knight, Death, and the Devil."

He is certainly a very strong creature, and always seems to me to be full of undeveloped force. He is distinctly young. He must strike other people so too, as I have sometimes heard the men refer to him as "the colt." He is apt to be restless and uneasy, for want of some means of working off his superfluous energy, I suppose. He was broken to driving very late, viewed according to the custom here, but he seems to have been tractable from the start. It may be a fantastical notion, but he seems to me, somehow, to have made a temporary surrender, and never to have fought out very thoroughly with man the question of supremacy. Yet, as I say, I think him a well-dispositioned animal.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, January 20, 1891.

Yesterday Mr. Cobb and I hitched up Polly and the colt in a light sleigh and drove to Moss Glen Falls. I

was really appalled at the mountains of logs of spruce and hemlock heaped up around the Moss Glen saw-mill. The destruction of the forest here is something to make your hair rise on your head with horror. I really have my doubts if enough will remain to admit of our repeating our trip to the logging camp. This is the exaggeration of strong feeling, but, without doubt, the woods are being rapidly destroyed.

Yesterday was the most charming day we have had this winter, and just before sunset I drove up to the house, taking my snow-shoes in the sleigh with me. I hitched the horse there, and went down into the swamp and along the wood road, which was crossed and re-crossed by the tracks of hares, squirrels, and mice. It's a great satisfaction to walk among your own trees, with the consciousness that they at least are secure, no longer in continual danger of the axe.

The day before yesterday I went through the Elmore woods. It was in the afternoon; the sun was rather low, and behind the clouds. I never saw a more completely wintry scene. The track was hollowed deep into the snow, which rose abruptly on each side to a level with the floor of the sleigh; it would have been a very difficult, almost an impossible matter to turn around, or even to pass another sleigh. This is (or was, before to-day's thaw) about the depth of the snow on an average, for in a dense wood like Elmore it could not have drifted. Of course, on the main roads the rollers have kept a pretty even surface, but on the less frequented mountain roads you travel in these little gullies.

It was as beautiful as it is in summer, but quite a

different place. It looked as if it might have been a Russian forest, the evergreens, of which I did not know there were so many in this wood, all with their boughs drooping under a heavy weight of snow, twigs and branches so thickly coated that the forest seemed very dense and impenetrable. You know how the road winds down for a quarter of a mile or so after you are fairly in the wood. There was no effect of light and shade, the sun having gone behind a belt of clouds; only in the northeast there was a little gleam of greenish sky. There was no wind, and the most intense silence, broken only by the creak of the runners and the very faint jingle of the sleigh-bells, for I went through very slowly.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, January 26, 1891.

To-day is charming, very pleasant, brilliant sunshine, but yesterday was intensely cold, several degrees below, and an intolerable searching west wind. I went down to the village to do some errands, and coming home, over the crest of the hill, the snow was drifting heavily, blowing in a cloud. I don't remember ever being so much impressed with the terrible nature of winter; it seemed as if nothing could live for more than a few hours in such an atmosphere. At five o'clock it was 8° below, but later, when I looked out at about nine o'clock, it had risen two degrees. However, it was comfortable enough indoors.

Yesterday I stopped to ask about the temperature in

the village. It was 30° below at six this morning, colder than it has been for several years. It was 3° below while I was in the village, and 7° when I reached the house at about sunset.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, January 31, 1891.

How intensely you would have enjoyed the coloring of the clear cold days we had in December. You can imagine what a delicate pink the distance, snow-covered, might have been; and the irregularities of the surface, reflecting the light in various colors, made it much more complex than the distance of summer-time.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, February 14, 1891.

Last night a wonderful effect—exceedingly cold (—10°), clear moonlight, and in the north-northwest a rose-red aurora borealis. It streamed up behind the Mountain a soft rose-color, and also the same effect (though not so brilliant) a little east of north; due north it was the usual cold blue light. It did not last very long.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, October 20, 1891.

I've been intending to write you for some time past, but, as they say here, I've not "got round to it"—which

is the same thing, I suppose, as not having gone squarely about it. Forgive this confession of a difficulty; but the world, such as it is represented in these parts, is too much with me.

TO HENRY HOLT

STOWE, December 9, 1891.

Two very high winds have swept over the country from the south, levelling fences, unroofing barns, and causing our house to jar and tremble, and, what is really cause for regretful remark, taking down some very fine old hemlocks.

I really believe you would enjoy Stowe now, even more than you did earlier in the season; these open winters are, to my mind, beautiful beyond what any other season has to offer. The woods, though leafless, are now at their best.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, January 20, 1892.

I drove over to Moscow in the afternoon, and coming home, in the face of the wind, the little snow-crystals cut so sharply that it was impossible to keep one's eyes open, only just so far as to be able to see the road and avoid running into anybody; and when I arrived at the village, my eyelashes were frozen together so tightly that I had to thaw the ice off with my fingers before I could open my eyes. Polly, who was going pretty well, and rather

warm, was frost-covered to the extent of appearing almost as much of a white as a bay horse.

The thermometer at the stable this morning was only 34°, which is a very reasonable temperature, I think, though of course one would prefer it should not go lower than 40° or 50°.

January 27.

We skidded two or three lengths of ash out of the swamp the other day. It was quite fun—the tree (our own tree) sawed up by our own man with our own saws, the log drawn out by our own horse in our own harness, and finally carried down to the mill on our own sled. This, after borrowing harnesses, hiring horses and sledges, was quite refreshing. The ash worked up into very nice-looking timber.

The wind has drifted the snow a good deal, and the sharp edges of the drifts, heaved up here and there across the meadow, make a very wintry aspect. About zero all day, but clear. Wind now to the south—looks like a thaw.

TO HENRY HOLT

Stowe, February 8, 1892.

I believe there is a prospect of much reward in a certain class of investment in Stowe, Vermont. This is rather an abrupt way to spring this conviction upon you, but I have been thinking the matter over of late, and as I know you to be interested in the place, and one amused by suggestions of the kind, I have even determined dis-

covering to you my ideas on the subject. If it is going to bore you, read no further, for investment is my theme quite to the end. I shall bear you no malice if you decline the remainder, which follows as the development of an idea more in sport than for profit.

I don't mean investing money in a hotel or inn, or cottages to be let, which *might* be profitable conducted with unusual skill and energy, nor in farming on a large scale, which would be profitable to any one with a head for business and a natural bent that way; but what I mean is simply an investment that any rich man might make, and which would in time afford a good profit without requiring peculiar gifts or much expense of energy—an investment, moreover, not involving a vast amount of money in purchase, very little in current expense, paying back something at once, increasing that payment yearly until within ten or fifteen years the profit becomes very large, and, fourthly and lastly, retaining its value undiminished forever, and, to conclude, conferring a priceless boon upon the children of earth. In a word, the investor profits both body and soul, puts money in his purse, and performs at the same time an act of truest philanthropy.

All this may be done by building a sawmill and by putting a few thousand dollars into the more remote districts of spruce forests that cover these mountains—parts as yet comparatively inaccessible and untouched.

In order to explain the peculiar advantages of such an investment, let me in the first place make some remarks respecting the lumber trade. For many years previous to this (when it is peculiarly the case) the lumber market throughout the country has been overstocked,

and prices consequently have been low; yet, nevertheless, it is agreed in this part of Vermont that the lumber business pays better than any other. Though farming may now be said to be at its best, for the country is neither too new nor too old, is well cleared and drained, and still retains sufficient forest to economize the moisture, yet the lumber business, choked with competition, pays better. Nor does this excess of supply cause any abatement in the cutting of the forests, which is done at about the same or at an increased rate yearly, the reason being either that each lumberman counts on the discouragement of his competitors or else that all make sufficient profit.

Indeed, I understand that they make about one dollar on every thousand square feet, and as the mills get out from two to three millions of square feet yearly, the profit is not despicable. Besides, it is to be considered that the lumberman's methods are not economical. He either buys the land he cuts upon, or buys the right to cut trees on other people's lands; he cuts very close, so much so that he cannot again within twenty years, perhaps ever, go over the same land, even if he owns it, and the cost of his road-building, etc., is consequently thrown away.

Thus it may be seen from the lumberman's methods that the state of the market in no wise tends to preserve the forests, and in this reckless slaughter is the profit of the investor who can afford to wait, for it clears the way to the remoter forests, both for profits and for roads.

The proper way, of course, to invest in forest land is to buy a large tract, sufficiently large to be divided into,

say, ten districts, one tenth of the whole to be cut over annually. In this way your forest lasts forever, the original cost of your roads is not lost (the repairing of them with so much at hand for the purpose would amount to nothing), the profit, as the country is cleared, yearly increases, and if under present conditions the business pays, how much more will it within ten years?

In addition, there are in this State peculiar advantages in connection with the lumber trade. In the first place, the tree that is principally cut on these mountains is permanent for certain qualities and purposes. For dimension timber and framing of houses and for the lesser spars of vessels nothing is so good as spruce, for besides being as light and as easily worked as white pine, it is more elastic and enduring and of a tougher consistency. It is unrivalled as a framing timber; it can be put to almost all the uses where white pine was formerly exclusively employed, and is the best for general purposes of the soft woods that remain to us. I speak of the spruce particularly, although there are splendid forests of valuable hard wood in this State which command better prices.

There is to be considered the fact that the forests of Vermont are nearer the centres of demand south and southeast than those of any other State (except perhaps New Hampshire), and that New England and southern New York are particularly well cleared. Ask any builder you know where he gets his lumber, and I think you will find that all of it travels far before reaching New York, but his spruce from Vermont and northern New York comes the shortest distance; the white pine

from Canada and Wisconsin, the hard pine from Georgia and Alabama, the white wood from western Pennsylvania, etc., etc.

But what most contributes to the profit to be made here is the length and severity of the winter, which, injurious to all other industries, is an aid to this, by making it possible for a term of four months to penetrate the forests and transport the lumber with comparative ease, and at probably one third of the cost expended in regions of little or no snow. This remains an advantage over every lumber district further south. Also, the long interruption to farming throws a large class of laborers into this business, at ordinary wages and during a time when their services are most needed—that is to say, from September until Christmas or the first of January, the season of tree-cutting, or even for a longer period, if the snow does not become too deep to interfere with the work.

Again, it must not be forgotten that the laws of this State are peculiarly favorable to holders of real estate, and will probably continue so, while the cities remain unimportant, as they are likely to do.

As regards the prices of forest land, I understand that districts more or less remote have been sold within a few years at $2.50 the acre, a thousand acres for $2,500.

Respecting the cost of sawmills, those run by water-power, with all necessary machinery, water-privilege, etc., involve an outlay of about $5,000; but water is too unreliable a motor—steam is preferable. But the capacity of the mill should be considered in connection with

the extent of forest land that feeds it. The largest mills here, with every kind of machine for preparing boards, dimension timber, shingles, clapboards, etc., cost in the neighborhood of $20,000, and are capable of producing 20,000 square feet of lumber per day. But suppose the extent of forest land annually cut to be one hundred acres, one tenth of the whole thousand: a steam mill with all necessary machinery, and capable of manufacturing in the course of the year all the lumber cut on the given amount of land, would probably require a sum of from eleven to thirteen thousand dollars.

Now to arrive at the amount of lumber on a hundred acres: There are probably from two to three hundred spruce trees, of a size most suitable for lumber purposes, to an acre; but in buying an extensive tract of forest land, although at a certain elevation the spruce has its natural range above the deciduous and hard-wood trees (the canoe birch excepted), it is nevertheless not at all impossible that a certain proportion of such a purchase may bear them but scantily. Let us say, then, 70 spruce to the acre, in each tree (a moderate estimate) 400 square feet of lumber—that is to say, 28,000 square feet to the acre; a hundred acres make the amount 2,800,000 square feet, on which the profit is about $2,800.

Thus it is seen that the outlay on land and mill may be set at or within $15,000, and the profit, at the present reduced rate, pays for the undertaking in about six years.

This profit of one dollar on a thousand square feet refers, I understand, to all grades, and, in this view,

would be too low an estimate in connection with the scheme I am expounding, for the proportion of first grade lumber from forests treated as I have suggested would be larger than the mills here ordinarily ship, and the profit is proportionately greater on the higher grades.

These calculations are based, you see, on existing conditions; there is every prospect to expect a very great increase, perhaps the doubling of the profits within ten years.

It is worth while to add also that the taxes on land valued at $2.50 an acre cannot amount to very much.

What do you think of this? Is it not worth the attention of the rich and perfect philanthropist, the man who would do good to himself and others?

P. S. I have forgotten to say that the expense of running a steam mill is very little more than that involved in working by water-power—just as much as the wages of, say, two men, engineers, amount to—for the waste lumber, edgings, sawdust, etc., provide ample fuel.

P. P. S. I am afraid, being so much occupied in explaining pecuniary advantages, I have somewhat slighted the side philanthropic, but that is of course obvious. By cutting the forests as I propose, all necessary timber is supplied to the wants of civilization, and, far from being destroyed or injured, the forest remains a thing of beauty and a joy forever, and an inestimable blessing to the farmer.

TO HIS MOTHER

Stowe, March 13, 1892.

To-day is one of those cold clear March days intolerably windy and bleak in cities, but here you can always find a warm and cosy corner out of doors. Yesterday I was in the swamp looking for birds, and although there was a bitter southwest wind blowing, in that sheltered place the air was as warm and pleasant as April. Indeed, for the last two days we have felt the benefit of the wood very much, for whereas it has been extremely cold and disagreeable in the village, or anywhere where the southwest wind strikes, we have felt little discomfort, and only realized how bleak the weather was by driving out to the village, etc.

Last night was full moon, I think. I tried the bob on the crust over the mowing; it did not go very well, as the drifts interfered. But I never saw a more beautiful night. It was almost as light as day. The whole surface of the slope, where the lighter snow clung in long wavy lines to the crust, had the ribbed look of sea sand—little drifts with a sharp edge, the other side swept off by the wind, in the same manner as undertow deals with light sand.

The days are getting long again, and the sunset begins to creep up a little to the north beyond the edge of the woods.

Yesterday I think I saw the first of the warblers, the myrtle warbler, but I am not sure. However, the birds in the swamp were not strictly winter birds, but such as

indicate a little change in the season, notably the brown creeper.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, March 19, 1892.

Now is the time when I begin to listen for notes of song sparrows or bluebirds, and make all my out-of-door excursions armed with a field-glass to catch the first glimpse of them. Perhaps you can understand how the appearance and voice of the earliest migratory birds affect me; they "make my blood cold and my hair to stare"—as you say Beethoven's music does with you.

C. sent me by mail yesterday two stories, both amusing, but one was by Miss Wilkins. It is not enough to say "truthful"; every word was precious, the pure gold of truth.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, March 24, 1892.

I have been inquiring about dog licenses, and thus stands the law in Vermont: before April 1st male dogs taxed one dollar, after April 1st until May, the third week (I believe), two dollars, after the third week in May they are condemned—in other words, they throw them into the brier-patch. Tojo is very much afraid, as he tells me, "dat Mr. Man ketch him by de behime leg and fling 'im blip! in de middle of de brier-patch—an' 'tain't all de creeturs," Tojo adds, "dat kin crawl out onter a chinkapin log and koam de pitch outer der har."

He 'lows he dunner w'at minnit gwineter be de nex'—consequently I must have a little light on the subject.

March 31.

Tojo's mind is at rest. If any one should even suggest the brier-patch, all he has to do is to put his hand in his pocket and pull out a little card, "A little yellowish-gray Skye terrier six years old." *Nobody allowed to fling him in de brier-patch!*

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, March 27, 1892.

I have asked you before about Théophile Gautier, but I want to know a little more about him. What has he written besides "Captain Fracasse" and (what I am now reading) "A Winter in Russia"? He is certainly a very acute and delicate though not very subtle observer, and presents a picture in a vivid and interesting way, an out-of-door picture especially; when he deals with personalities I am not so much amused. "Captain Fracasse" took me back to pantomime days: I saw the most startling and vivid pictures, real in that sense but in no way connected with real life, and saw them with the clearness and force with which the fresh eye of eight years or so takes impressions. It is much the same with this book.

Have you seen Thayer lately? When you do, ask him if the color in a landscape varies in proportion to the amount of light. Is there more color on a sunshiny day

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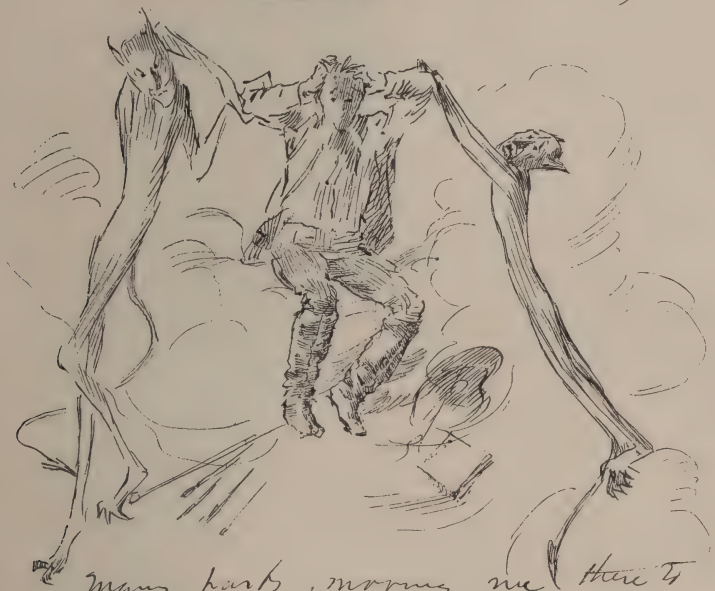

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Behold my unhappy dilemma
Faithfully
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than a cloudy one? Or is it a change of values only? If I did not suspect myself of opinions at variance with scientific facts, I should be tempted to believe there was more color in a winter than a summer landscape; the yellows and reds certainly seem to hold out longer, and the blue of distance to retire much beyond summer limits. Is this due to a clearer atmosphere? The mountains (blue in summer) are now (snow-covered) of a kind of golden pink and lilac.

I continually think of you in noting these delicate colors and the extreme sharpness of all outlines of things near at hand—the tufty edge of a mowing or pasture now as sharp as a knife-blade against the distance. It's the kind of thing I think you would like to paint.

I want very much to send something to the American Artists, and I shall do so, if I do not fall between the devils of Procrastination and Delay which beset me. Besides that, I am under the dominion of the demon that presides over Jacks of All Trades—a fate perfectly undeserved, as I am one simply by circumstances, neither inclination nor an ability to play any part moving me thereto. Behold my unhappy dilemma!

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, April 8, 1892.

I would like to know what date is the very latest for sending in pictures to the American Artists jury, because the weather is now, I think, very unfavorable for me to

make those alterations in my picture. Unlike most seasons at this time, it is not the warm hazy April weather (which I tried to represent), but is clear, cold, and windy, with bright bursts of sunshine and long intervals of shadow—the most perplexing weather for painting.

The suggestion you made regarding my picture I find valuable, and truth requires me to make the alteration in it, even if I miss the jury and the exhibition.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, August 4, 1892.

I should have been very glad to go to Windsor with R., but the day is hot, and the Capulets are abroad, and my picture I must finish before September yellows prevail. Finished it must be in this month or left over until next year—a very depressing alternative. I am painting a real American artist picture—an elm tree, a sunset. I am happy that R. liked it; but it is a very uninspired spirit that presides over its execution.

TO MRS. JOHN W. ELLIOT

STOWE, November 30, 1892.

Winter, as you guess, is indeed here; the temperature says so, though not too severely, and it is so in aspect. We have had only a slight fall of snow, but the steady cold makes much of it; the country, all but the valley itself, lies white, and the freezing of clouds makes the mountain tops very wintry.

That call of nuthatches is to be heard in the woods now of sunny days, also tapping of woodpeckers (hairy) and sometimes the sounding blows of a logcock—black-cocks, as they call them here; and chickadees, you know, we have always with us.

Yesterday I saw a small flock of pine grosbeaks, dark slaty in color, with overlying ruddy or salmon tint. They flit restlessly, and are shy for unsophisticated birds. On taking flight, when fairly launched they give a succession of wild and plaintive notes, which sometimes continue, growing faint, after they have quite disappeared.

On Sunday our hired man shot a coon—rather a fine skin. The coon was found asleep in a kind of nest he had made in the foot of a hollow tree. He lacked one fore foot, which he had probably gnawed off to free himself from a trap, and so, being unable to climb his tree, was an easy prey. Such is the lot of the disinherited wild creatures!

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, December 10, 1892.

Professor ——, it seems, is sufficiently small of soul to comment on a hole he detects in the foliage of my hemlock tree. How does he know that I didn't do it on purpose? or that it is really a hole at all, and not painted? My former method of mending it was to stop it up with paint—I don't know of any other, do you?

Very mild winter here so far; no sleighing. But I am well pleased, for I know I shall have snow enough, enough winter and rough weather.

By the way, "rough" is in common use here in the sense of cold or inclement.

TO MRS. JOHN W. ELLIOT

STOWE, December 27, 1892.

A party of our friends spent Christmas with us, and returned to New York perfectly convinced of the severity of Vermont winter. They arrived here on the coldest day I have ever felt, sunless, with a strong southwest wind that gave emphasis to a recorded temperature of 8° throughout the greater part of the day.

It was while these friends were here that we went on an expedition which I should think would interest you very much. It was to a logging camp on the mountains east of us.

We drove up in a rough traverse farm-sledge (for the mountain roads are more comfortably and safely travelled in such a conveyance), and succeeded in penetrating as far as any trace of road extended, where the choppers were at work. To gain this point we passed through the hard-wood belt, into the region of spruces.

The clouds had frozen on the trees at this height, and the effect was indescribably beautiful and fantastic. In gorges or hollows of the mountains where the sun rested for only a few hours during the day, and where the clouds had probably hung heavily, it was very much that of window-pane frost foliage made real. The boughs were not ice-covered, but coated to a velvety depth with innumerable tiny crystals, even more remarkable on the birches than the evergreens, for it gave the

many branching boughs of the former something of the appearance of gigantic trees of coral.

At this height the canoe birches are not uncommon, and reach a fair size; their trunks, lead-colored or silvery, sometimes russet-tinted, are very soothing among the too frequent yellow birches. We have none in the valleys, I think.

The logging life is picturesque, and sometimes dangerous. The axemen suffer only through carelessness, I fancy, for the spruce is not a large tree at best, and the wood is so tough and elastic that flying boughs or rebounding tops are of rare occurrence. The men are recruited mostly from the lower classes of French Canadians, and I was interested to note certain characteristics (eyes particularly) pure Indian.

The teamsters' bane is the liability of their runner chains to breakage. These chains, wound around the runner, serve as brake or drag to the load, sometimes of fifteen to twenty logs. If this accident occurs, there is but one hope for the horses—to keep ahead of the load; and the danger is hardly less to the teamster.

Up in the spruce forest I saw both chickadees and pine grosbeaks.

Curiously enough, notwithstanding the severe winter, I have only once seen a flock of snowflakes. I am sorry, for their flight is, I think, the finest animate spectacle that the winter affords. They remind me of sea birds, flying with such swiftness and power, passing over with a plaintive twitter or chatter—a long ripple of sound.

It is characteristic of winter birds to talk as they fly,

is it not? Pine grosbeaks make a harsh outcry, and redpolls chatter like sparrows when they rise, and flying give the same long-drawn "tē-wĕĕ" with which canaries usually prelude their song.

The only particularly interesting bird I have seen of late is the blackcock (pileated woodpecker), glossy black, a broad white band through the wing, and a high brilliant vermilion crest; his note a loud "flicker."

I saw him in the wood on a very cold day, when the trees were cracking in a manner most mysterious and startling, a sound varying in intensity from a pistol shot to the pop of a toy air-gun.

TO HIS SISTER

Worcester, February 2, 1893.

I have been thinking about your poems, and I believe the principal fault is in treating familiarly, as if known, a subject with which you are not very conversant, viz., nature, in the meaning of field and forest, wild life.

You have not observed enough to distinguish between what are common phenomena and what accidental. You do not know the subject sufficiently well to select the really significant details. Of course you have recorded what you have been impressed with, but through ignorance of conditions that make one thing observed, in relation to time and place, more significant than another, you have failed generally to record details of a really suggestive sort. As for instance:

"The upland pasture . . .
And saw the slender grasses stand
Distinct against the sunset sky."

Characteristic of pasture is turf close-cropped by cattle; consequently, tall grasses, being accidental, are poor things to record in connection with pasture.

"The wood is thrilled
By the soft call of a late-nesting thrush."

"Soft" is not the word that suggests anything to me in this relation.

Last line of "Before Harvest" very bad; stars come so meekly, so imperceptibly, with so little regard to each other, are so very individual and so lonely, that "ushered" is "a vile phrase, a very vile phrase." The right word ought, I think, to have the meaning of going before, preceding.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, February 26, 1893.

All America, I feel, should read Merwin's book. Do you so when I return it, for I see that none of your household have already looked into it—uncut leaves as evidence. It treats the noble subject of horse-flesh from the proper point of view, and a new one in this department of literature: not from the horse-jockey's or the trainer's or the breeder's, or the one-equine-family enthusiast's, but from the horse-lover's point of view, the most valuable and most catholic. It is the kind of book

that ought (and if it does not, the reader is to blame) to awaken a new interest in horses; in the case of those already interested in the subject, it is calculated to stimulate that interest more than any book of the kind I have ever seen. It should prove as good or a better friend to horses than "Black Beauty."

I am predicting an early spring—a little way I have, in common with most dwellers in hard winter climates. Certainly we have warm sunny weather now.

By the way, the notice of Merwin's book in the "Nation" is in the carping spirit usually displayed in that department of the paper; it cries out against details, but does not interest itself in the spirit.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, March 4, 1893.

Did you ever hear of four-color painters? Those who considered *green* (in addition to red, blue, and yellow) as one of the primary colors?

The psychologists admit that all magentas and purples are combinations of red and blue. In looking at them they recognize, as a painter would, the two primary colors and nothing more; whereas of green they affirm that, while a bluish or yellowish tendency is observable, there is a sense of an underlying—a primary color, such as red or blue conveys, something that's neither blue nor yellow, but *green*. What do you think of this?

I've been so much puzzled by the colors at twilight

that I'm wondering if there's not truth in it. Both twilight and moonlight, though on the whole exhibiting almost solely purple and lilac tints, have certain greenish effects which, in painting, a little mixture of yellow fails to reproduce. This might result from a predominance of blue, but such a predominance can hardly be accounted for by distance, since red would then naturally outlast yellow, or by nearness, for then blue is at its least power; but admit green as a primary color, and the difficulty is solved. This may be all in my eyes, and I greatly suspect it is. Various tests show my eyes to disagree in a most pronounced manner, being of different focus and one evidently less capable of detecting color than the other. Of course, to admit a fourth primary color does not create one for painting purposes—we shall still have to mix up blues and yellows; but the admission, perhaps, might help one in *seeing*.

If you consider me quite, quite mad, do say so with frankness.

Psychologists also say that brightness and whiteness are synonymous. I combated this statement at first, but the more I think on't, the more I believe they are in the right. What think you of this opinion? Not to offend the psychologists, you might reply with all of Malvolio's tact and in his very words, if you disagree.

All this is the result of my visit to Clark University.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, March 8, 1893.

Do you know how to dispose of paintings of great American artists such as . . .?* We have of the works of all of these gentlemen, and would gladly part with them for good gold. Do you think it possible to sell them?

I speak with little reverence of these worthies, who are so bold in error, painting distant mountains bright orange, and including the glorious sun himself in the range of their values (as he descends in the gathering brown, yes, actually brown twilight), but notwithstanding color, value, etc., their sunsets leave no doubt in the observer's mind as to what they were about, whereas those who look at *my* twilight picture are exceedingly uneasy until its strange appearance is explained to them.

My picture gets along slowly, but I do not despair.

TO CHARLES C. BURLINGHAM

STOWE, March 13, 1893.

I am a citizen of this State, you know, so, to act the part of a good one, I go to town meetings and vote as my conscience dictates. Party is not considered at these elections; personal spleen influences the voting slightly, but in the main the farmer's common sense (which is

* Certain early American artists.

vast) governs, and good men are chosen. This is the case with the town offices, where a better feeling is manifested than concerning less intimate trusts, such as representatives to the State legislature.

Sugar weather is crowding upon the farmers here a little too fast for their satisfaction; they have hardly gotten their wood sawed as yet. It will be an early spring, I think, without doubt, and there'll be more sugar made in March than in April, which, popular tradition to the contrary, is seldom the case.

I suppose R. keeps you informed of his whereabouts and fortunes. He still keeps his interest in birds, I suppose. Mine revives powerfully every spring, and I am compelled to let everything on the farm go, and even my painting, to follow it. Hermit thrushes in June are almost our commonest bird (for we live close to the wood), and veeries, shy in more civilized localities, are frequent here. There's no sound that birds make so wild and thrilling as their song, I believe. We hear them the last of all at evening, and sometimes they will sing at night.

TO MRS. JOHN W. ELLIOT

STOWE, March 23, 1893.

I saw yesterday two meadowlarks. These birds seem to take precedence of bluebirds, even. It is the first time this year that the fact of spring has been expressed in its fine type; hitherto the signs (winged) have been writ large and black.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, March 27, 1893.

I am sorry I cannot send the picture. I received your telegram this morning, and it caused me for some reason or other to regard my picture more favorably; it inspired me with a transient confidence, now departed. I cannot deceive the public (if that chance should be afforded me, and methinks no conscientious jury would admit of it) in the presenting of so noble a scene with so slight, so feeble, and so wretched a counterfeit. A snow picture is all of finest edges, most delicate tints, which it is hopeless to slight. Truly, if it is possible to say one thing requires more painting than another, it is a winter landscape.

I was determined to send it you this morning and abide by your decision; I even went the length of having a box made for it; but at the critical moment, as the cover was ready to place over it, my sense of its utter inadequacy quite overcame all other considerations, and now I'm fixed in my determination not to send it.

Truly, the weather has been so contrary that I've had only two weeks' work on it, and to one of my small powers that is not time enough.

I cannot tell you how vexing it is to me to have nothing whatever for this exhibition, but such is the fact.

I thank you again and again for the trouble I know you've taken; if it were for no other reason than to complete your part, *i.e.*, my picture in your frame, I should

be strongly tempted to send it, but it is an impossible case, believe it, Joe, not a matter of fantastical doubts.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, May 2, 1893.

What think you of French's gigantic lady? It has dignity and considerable charm, has it not? There is something admirable about his work of that order very lacking to most American efforts—something reserved and scholarly, a kind of authority, which the French so remarkably possess, something almost classic. Well, he has a touch of this, whereas most of the designs (I judge by what I have seen in the magazines) strike me as being flimsy, experimental, without power or confidence.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, October 1, 1893.

Shall I not send you "David Balfour"? I have finished it. But perhaps it would be well to wait until you leave the so distracting place of the World's Fair, for it is a book to be read with all the powers of appreciation you possess. I am fresh from reading it, but it seems to me that there is nothing in the way of story-telling to surpass the last part of it. It's a great treasure among books.

This reminds me of something that appears to me

exceedingly comical: the fact that Vermont, in order to show to the world its wealth of marble quarries, has adopted the Pompeian style for its State building.* What genius conceived this plan, to unite such seemingly conflicting conditions of life? The interior is said to be decorated in the Pompeian fashion. What can this mean? Find out for me, will you not? Perhaps there is a frieze representing the sturdy Vermonter, with sheepskin leggings and mittens, his toga wrapt about him, armed with a bit-stock and a half-inch bit, sallying forth to tap the sugar maples on the slopes of Vesuvius; or, possibly, watching a trotting chariot race at the amphitheatre; or bringing in the harvest with dancing and song (so like him!) and sacrifices to Ceres.

TO HIS BROTHER HENRY

STOWE, October 30, 1893.

Have you read "David Balfour"? Do so. It is wonderful; all Stevenson's old power, or lacking but little of it, and coupled with something more masterly, more inevitable in the telling.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, November 2, 1893.

M. has been reading "Wuthering Heights" aloud. I don't recommend any one to read it, and I hate even to

* At the Chicago Exposition.

think of it, for it comes near the chief position, in my opinion, of all the outrageous conceptions ever written down. The appeal to the feelings would seem too gross if it were not for the terrible reality of the story, which convinces when the credulity is most strained, and makes to seem true and reasonable what would otherwise appear as outrageous improbability. It is much less like an imaginative work than a simple narration of actual occurrences.

Yet there are some moments, certainly one, where it approaches, and perhaps reaches, the pathos of real tragedy—I mean where Catherine (the first Catherine) learns of Heathcliff's return. You know the book, do you not?

It reads like a story that, if not actually witnessed, has gradually grown up in the mind and been so studied and so felt, each character so clearly seen, that no uncertainty or obscurity at any moment of the narration troubled the author's mind. The touch is as sure as if in every turn and circumstance of the story it followed the cold fact.

The style, to my thinking, is admirable, so simple, so clear, and every now and then illuminated with thrilling words.

So far as I have read of the Brontë works, this seems to me easily second. It is an ugly depressing story; terror and gloom make the atmosphere of all their works, as well as of their history.

TO MRS. JOHN W. ELLIOT

STOWE, November 19, 1893.

The books were all appreciated. There wants no apology for the amount of literature; on the contrary, the more thanks are due you. My mother took very kindly to Mr. Trollope's work, and for my part I find the books on Arabian travel interesting throughout. The Arab's is certainly an ideal existence.

The illustrations of "La Marche à l'Etoile" are impressive; the mystery of the silhouette figures and the simplicity of the designs appeal strongly to the imagination. There is an atmosphere of night, and a sense of width and stillness, as of an open and wintry country, very powerfully rendered. The appearance in the various groups of sustained and deliberate motion seemed to me to be admirably given. I am curious to know what the music is like.

F. will have told you, perhaps, of her finding a little Acadian owl in our wood. He was very compact, very cunning, and winked his eyes at us in a sleepy manner; but they had nevertheless the angry expression of a bird of prey, and, when fully opened upon you, conveyed a feeling of awe or rebuke very odd as being imposed by such a small personality.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, May 4, 1894.

This is the most astonishing spring; it comes, as Brer Rabbit might put it, "a-zoonin'." All one can do is feebly to express admiration at the rapid succession of events; to endeavor to record any of these daily changing aspects is quite out of the question.

The hobble-bush, the cherry, the June-berry are out. The dog-tooth violet, spring-beauty, Dutchman's breeches, hepatica are all about over. I found one and the last hepatica flower yesterday, but I saw from the scattered petals that many had been in bloom. The trees are cloudy, round, of pale pinks and yellows, no solid masses of foliage, though the aspens are bright green and almost in full leaf.

It has been hot and dry; and a strange thing it is to be able to see snow not only on Mansfield but in the spruce wood of Hogback.

Cliff swallows were here on the 21st of April, so you may know that most of the birds have arrived. Last night after sunset, for the first time this year, I heard in the swamp the rippling, tripping song which I think is the winter wren's.

TO MRS. JOHN W. ELLIOT

STOWE, May 18, 1894.

Was there ever a spring so early and so swift? The general aspect now is of June rather than May, but you know the Vermont June is only half a summer month.

One night in the early part of April, as my mother and I were locking doors and windows and putting out lamps before going to bed, just before the last light was to be extinguished my mother caught sight of a fluttering object on the floor, which proved to be the scarcely expanded cecropia. We shut him up in a room by himself and kept him for three or four days. I do not know if they feed at all in this stage, but this one would sit, slowly waving his wings, in the palm of my hand, and make no objection to a pin's head coated with a syrup of sugar and water being thrust under his mouth; indeed, I thought he depressed his head as if tasting or absorbing the liquid, but it may have been an involuntary trembling of my hand that caused the seeming action. A warm spell of weather followed, so we took advantage of it to give him his freedom; his attempted flights, ending in staggering encounters with the walls, were a somewhat sickening spectacle.

It was a cruel thing to hurry up his appearance under false persuasion, and confront him with bare and colorless April when, in the natural order of things, he should have broken the chrysalis in June. I must say so much, though I remember that you were a party to the deceit.

Of the birds, only the veeries seem late; the bobo-

links sing, but the veery is silent. True, they are mystery-lovers, and never sing until the foliage makes a concealment, but this year I begin to fear that, like the before mentioned singers, they have passed through a stage of material excellence and fallen victims to the unnatural appetites of West Indians or inhabitants of Guatemala. But this is a flippant tone to take respecting a thrush.

I wish you could see the colts now; they are running in their pasture, and are full of tricks of unconscious posing, for the poetical pastoral, wild, etc. They continue as tame as dogs.

By the way, after the sudden appearance of the moth, my mother became apprehensive regarding the wasp's nest, so there is nothing to report of that. I carried it out and left it on a stump near the wood; of what has since happened to it or its inhabitants I know nothing.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, May 19, 1894.

Drove around by the Moss Glen Fall and the grassy road.

The long hill to Brownsville was as beautiful as usual, the leaves meeting overhead, the banks thick with ferns and wild flowers and spongy with mosses, a real forest undergrowth of hobble-bush and moosewood on either hand. The birds are beginning to sing more than

they did two weeks ago, and at last I have heard the veery—the "honeyed whine," as Charles Reade says.

The owner of Dandy stopped here yesterday at noon. I was rather amused by him, though I thought his manners somewhat demoralizing for the youthful help. His face was smooth-shaven, formed and informed with a kind of piggish impudence—the kind of raw dandy that only a country town can produce. He stood about smoking a vile cigar, and commenting in a drawling tone, and not without some slight savor of wit, on H.'s abilities as a laboring man.

I go regularly every day to have a little fighting game with Sintram. Audrey is growing tamer and more gentle all the time. She begins to show white hairs, as if a star were forming in the middle of her forehead—as a sign of a changed nature or not, I am unable to say.

Tell R. to look at Cavazza's sketch called "Jerry" in the "Atlantic" (latest). We have been interested in her writing.

TO HIS MOTHER

STOWE, May 23, 1894.

I took Polly out early for a long drive on the road that H. H.'s enterprise discovered, that which lies between the stage and the river road to Waterbury Centre. It was lovely, reposeful, and still; and it was a real relief to be in a country so shut in. From this road you see the ragged mountains northeast toward Middle-

1 year Smiths

sex, the wall of the Mansfield spurs to the west, with Camel's Hump terminating the line in the southwest; Hogback, too, ranges up on the northeast. But somehow, in spite of all the mountains in sight, there is something that suggests seclusion and repose, for there are some points, looking due south for instance, where the sky-line is broken by grassy knolls crowned with groups of thick-leaved maples. It was warm, but not sultry, and threatening rain—enormous masses of cloud very black over the Hump. It was really summer, the air full of warm and pungent smells, the leaves, ferns, and grasses full and thriving, and that settled aspect, as if there had never been any state but summer and no change of season would ever follow. The farmhouses, too, had that air (a summer characteristic) of having been finally deserted by their inmates.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, August 6, 1894.

What a good thing that was of Mrs. Catherwood's in the late "Atlantic"—"Pontiac's Lookout." . . .

In literature, the world goes the way to damnation with a blindness quite astonishing. For my part, I don't dare to look beyond the title-page of any new book that does not bear one of the names Stevenson, Wilkins, Hardy. I have a new book (*not a novel*) that gives me keen joy; it is Battell's "Register of Morgan Horses." There are in't photographs that well exhibit the beauty

of the Morgan family, and I am pleased to see Polly's grandsire spoken of with great respect.

TO HIS SISTER

SUMMIT HOUSE, MOUNT MANSFIELD,
August, 1894.

We have already spent two nights here, arriving on the first day at about six o'clock. It was clear cold weather, and at that time in the evening the Notch was in deep shadow, a dark purple-blue—you know how dark a spruce-timbered mountain like Sterling can look. As we made the last turn on the road toward the summit, the north wind came over the ridge cold and strong, making a wintry sound in the dwarf firs. Yesterday was another such day, but warm in the sun. To-day it is bleak, cloudy, with occasional showers, but the wind continues in the north.

Beautiful as the sunrise is, the sunset is yet more lovely, to my thinking. It is interesting to see the shadow of the Mountain stretch over the valley. One experiences a state of feeling very lofty and Olympian in watching the night overtaking the dwellers below while there remains to us a reserve of sunlight in the west.

I have heard the whistling of whitethroats, the twittering of juncos, and have seen both, but no redpolls—indeed, nothing else. The birds are shy, and hug the bushes, flying low and stealthily. I fancy this rocky

region is a breeding place for hawks, which would account for the timidity of the lesser birds. Indeed, if it were not for the frequency of picnic parties and the bits and crumbs obtainable about the house, there would be no especial encouragement for the birds to remain.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, September 6, 1894.

I am back again from the Mountain, and feel much better for the change. It was a very interesting two weeks, but the country of pigmy forest and bare rock, thick cloud mists or wide map-like extensions of view, is too phenomenal to be well endured; it is full of a strange interest, but there is no repose.

I found nothing to paint, but there were many wild and interesting effects. Some days one could not see more than a few rods away, the thick mists drifting like smoke among the firs; at night the lights from the windows threw a shadow of one's self upon the dense cloud, and there were strange gliding and spectral illuminations. Sometimes people would kindle fires of brush and dead fir trees; the whole top of the mountain would be lit up, the light flickering on the rocks, showing them pale against the sky for an instant, and again leaving them indistinguishable in dark masses.

The only wild quadruped I saw on the Mountain (excepting mice) was a weasel, which passed close by within three feet of me without observing my presence. He looked around at last, but testified more curiosity

than alarm, creeping back among the rocks to stare at me; he thrust his little head out of a miniature cave, and his eyes shone like spots of gold.

Eagles, that have their nest in Nebraska Notch, came sailing over the Mountain on clear still days. There were hawks—chicken, and also, I suspect, the marsh harrier. I saw flocks of juncos and whitethroats, some song sparrows, myrtle warblers, the Nashville warbler (new to me), a pair of gold-crowned kinglets, and a golden-winged woodpecker; and on one occasion, on a cold day with a leaden wintry sky, I heard a low croaking sound from among the brush on the steep western slope, and presently four large black birds arose, wheeling against the sky, and, one of them uttering a loud hoarse croak, they took flight across the Mountain and disappeared in the southeast; they were ravens.

On one very cold morning a weasel was caught asleep in the hotel pantry; he was put into a tin pail, the top covered with a pane of glass, and exhibited to the curious for an hour or so. I made some sketches of him; he was the most attractive little wild creature I have ever seen. His eyes were rather large and dark, his expression innocent and somewhat pathetic; his fur was so thick as to form ridges, and was of a liver-brown color; the tip of his tail was obscurely black. Some thought him a young one, but I believe he was the so-called least weasel, more or less common northward. The one I saw two or three days previously was exactly similar in size and color. He did not appear at all frightened, but spent the greater part of his term of imprisonment curled up asleep.

What I wrote you of the plants on the Mountain was the result of a superficial observation before I had time to examine them, and was quite erroneous. If it is of interest to you, you will find here a more accurate account of what was peculiar to the summit, the region of dwarf forest and mossy bogs between the two peaks:

The balsam fir, the principal tree.

A dwarf variety (I believe) of the canoe birch, mingled everywhere with the evergreens.

The spruce, sparingly on the summit.

The mountain holly, very pretty shrub with ash-gray bark, pale leaves, and red solitary berries.

The mountain ash, less handsome than the same tree in the valley.

Cranberry tree, common, the berries less deep red but more transparent and (it was said) sweeter than those of the cultivated form in the valley.

Wild black cherry, rare.

Blueberries: low(?); Canadian, with downy leaves and branchlets; dwarf, with the lanceolate-leaved alpine variety—very pretty.

The bilberry (called blueberry here). The leaves are of lovely colors at this time of year, varying from a sage-green to purple.

The creeping wintergreen, in among the mosses, very common; and more delicate, with smaller pointed leaves, was the creeping snowberry.

In the mossy bogs, the small cranberry, with tiny shining leaves and mottled terminal berry.

Bunch-berry was very common.

Of spring flowers, I saw the leaves of many lilies;

of goldthread (very common); of two kinds of violet; of wake-robin (one).

The blue fruit of clintonia (common), and a Solomon's-seal.

One of the most interesting shrubs was the Labrador tea, the leaf dull green, the edges recurved, and beneath covered with a thick rusty wool; when crushed the younger leaves gave a sweet fragrance like lavender, the older ones had a strong and somewhat turpentiny flavor.

Indian-pipes were not infrequent. There were two plants growing in moss, one in wet boggy places, the other on barren slopes, both of the heath family, but which I could not identify satisfactorily. Also a lovely little white flower, very regular; five sepals, five petals, pod (superior) with three pistils, ten stamens, regularly opposite sepals and petals, all placed individually on the receptacle. Color, white with fine silvery streaks. The petals are notched at the top, spatulate in general form; the leaves are alternate (I think), clasping, and are fine, needle-like, and grow densely like a moss. The nearest I come to it in Gray is the cassiope, an alpine flower. Perhaps you can help me out. It was very common, flourishing where it seemed impossible for anything but lichens to find the means of life.

Where grass had been sown near the hotel, buttercups, asters, some kinds of goldenrod, and much everlasting were to be found, also a few raspberry bushes. I found also a pretty little purple-veined orchid.

When we first came up, there was a quantity of snake-head flowering on the east side (not on the summit).

The substitution of moss for grass in the open, for leaf-mould in the wood, was both strange and delightful. In boggy places there were velvety carpets, six inches deep, of beautiful orange-colored moss; indeed, there were almost all composite colors, none pure, of course, except perhaps yellow.

Much of the time on the Mountain the air was thick, smoky, from the effect of the terrible Michigan fires.

I looked through that very dull and tiresome book called "Esther Waters," but I found nothing worth the trouble.

See Stevenson's "My First Book," in "McClure's" current number. I am reminded of the Stevenson plays. I enjoyed them exceedingly. It is a very diluted form of the strong Stevensonian wine, however; you miss him where he is best, in his power to realize in a few words of inimitable descriptive writing.

They are interesting and picturesque, but too slight for plays; there is not enough body to them, especially "Deacon Brodie" and "Admiral Guinea." They are not based on common fate and experience. The theme is not of a deep or permanent interest. They are too much made of what is phenomenal and incidental. And everything is pushed to obtain a picturesque effect—and, indeed, perverted, though the very flimsiness of the theme compels it generally, as in the case of the unromantic, coarse brute Moore, made to pose at the close of one of the scenes as Brodie's Mephistopheles—a device to close the act effectively.

The situations do not come, like reading and writing, by nature; there is too much of art in their production.

The character of Brodie is enough to damn the play in itself, for the simple reason that he is a real scamp, and to interest as a play should interest there must be at least a balance of moral qualities, if not a preponderance for good. Mathias in "The Bells" is an instance in point; in him you have a genuine picture of remorse. There is nothing convincing about Brodie's remorse, his "new life," etc. You feel that it was but a temporary and fleeting conception, in which, by pure chance, he died. Indeed, you cannot help suspecting that it was but another device to end him decently and extort a little sympathy not properly his due. As for "Admiral Guinea," it is an incident, not a play. Who is the hero? Not Christopher, of all others; not the Admiral, who is hardly real. Pew is the hero; such being the case, it is necessarily a failure.

"Beau Austin," because it has a deeper and wider human interest, is better, but it is not a good play, to my thinking.

Notwithstanding and in spite of feeling all this, I read them with interest and great pleasure. What a wonderful picture of the various rogues of the last century in the dicing scene in "Deacon Brodie"!

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, November 13, 1894.

Yesterday at evening it cleared, and remained fine for a few hours. M. and I had gone down to the village

with Polly in the little yellow sleigh. We came home just at moonrise. With the dispersement of the clouds the air grew intensely cold. The mountains, uncovered for the first time in more than a week, were so heavily frosted that they seemed from the cloud line built up of solid ice, every tree an icy pinnacle; Hogback and Sterling were rose-colored, reflecting the sunset. The air was very clear, and there was no dimness or reddening of the moon; it seemed astonishingly big behind the trees in the wood road and the swamp, and shone with an extremely bright and cold radiance. Later at night it was very powerful; it showed the Mountain with most remarkable distinctness, the face a dead white against the sky, and the snow in the clefts of the Notch, behind the shoulder of Sterling, glimmered with such brightness as to suggest the idea of being lit by concealed artificial light.

The day before, when we passed through the woods, we came upon a little troop of partridges; driven from the ground thus early, they were feeding on the immature buds. Some fluttered down and strutted with a jerky hen-like walk through the snow; several flew over, passing high above us, swiftly and silently but with perceptible flutterment—a quick motion of the wings, as in the flight of all heavy or feeble fliers.

I hope these notings of every-day Stowe matters are not a bore to you. It pleases me to write them down.

TO HENRY HOLT

STOWE, November 18, 1894.

I don't feel that I can do much more to help your picture, and yet I am sorry to let it go, because I feel that its faults are glaring; but they are in the very constitution of it, and to amend them I must needs paint it over from the beginning. This would not, I believe, meet with your approval; and there's a shrewd doubt of my being able in any such case to better the attempt. However, it does not satisfy me; I think it is both hard and weak in treatment. In years hence, if I am alive and have acquired any skill, I'll offer to paint it over for you; in the mean time it must serve the turn. Those who paint as I am compelled to do, by fits and starts, are not able to command an even flow of skill; they have to rely a great deal on lifts of luck, on happy moments. So it happens this picture has been painted at unfavorable times, mostly when I have not felt very well, and at irregular and long intervals. I think it shows it.

TO HIS BROTHER HENRY

STOWE, November 20, 1894.

I thought of Kipling the other day, and in a charitable spirit. I remembered the "Punch" parody of his account of his American experiences: how, when he left the train at Brattleboro, he seemed to find himself en-

cased, set, as it were, in a great sapphire. Now this was true, and showed a discriminating sense of color. Toward evening the sky is sapphire-tinted, and the moon and stars shine with a cold blue light.

How sad and sudden is this news of Stevenson's death! What a loss! The best living writer of English, "the youngest son of old Sir Walter," the last of the story-tellers gone, while the realistic novel flourishes as a green bay tree, and the freer field exists for those "brainy" authors who deal with the vital questions of the day.

TO HIS BROTHER ROBERT

STOWE, January 19, 1895.

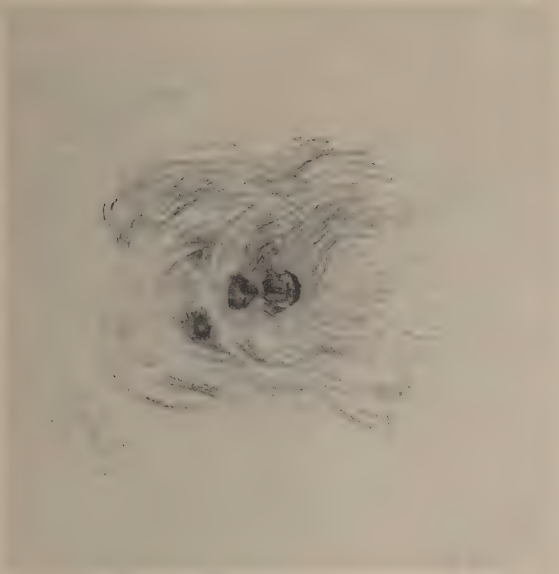
The idea of producing "Henry IV." is, to my thinking, most happy. I picture the Prince, a blond young fellow whose aim is to appear rather fine and effeminate, with all his roistering and swagger. You remember how scornfully he decries Hotspur's early morning sport of Scot-killing as a superfluous exhibition of brutish powers. He should be made up pale rather than rosy, but pretty; and I think a woman might succeed in tempering in her personality the coldness of his spirit so far even as to make the part a popular success. No man could so play the part and be other than what the Prince is in reality—selfish, clever, ungenerous, no fit figure for a hero.

Do you remember Howard Pyle's "Men of Iron"?

There's great aid in the dressing of the piece in that book; the costumes are most feelingly rendered.

Oh, what a play to put upon the stage! What characters! The scenes are more vivid to my mind's eye than anything else in literature, I think. How can you possibly hope to fill out the parts as they should be? Yet despair not; a suggestion in the right way would be precious indeed.

I can think of no one (but then I know few comedians) to be a Falstaff, save Owen; and the something in his style, dry, hard, and mercenary (so to speak it), might lend itself to express the underlying cynicism of the character. They all cry out for talented interpretation—Bardolph, the old dog; Pistol (Owen would be well here too); Glendower; the King—I should love to talk the play over with you. One scene in particular requires to be played between good actors—Hotspur's quarrel with Glendower. Hotspur, of course, would be in safe hands, but you must have a good Glendower. He is a great figure. Do you remember how the Pater, in telling one of his stories, would rouse himself to give point and emphasis to the climax, his eyes (so extraordinary, with a power of intense expression I have never seen equalled) burning truly like coals of fire? You know the manner. It is thus, I believe, that Glendower should speak his part, with passion and conviction—of the moment, at all events.



TO HIS MOTHER

Stowe, February 6, 1895.

You have escaped the coldest spell of the winter in being now in a comparatively temperate region. It is one of those days when, from an indoor point of view, it would seem impossible to sustain life outside for any length of time. There is no speck of color in sky or land; a shadowless and blinding day, with overhead a dense cloud of the same ghastly white as the snow. Now, at eleven o'clock, I have just been around to the piazza to look at the thermometer, which stands at 18° below. Last night it fell to —22°. It was a dreadful night; the window-panes, except in the double windows, were so clouded by frost as to be opaque. It was unusually dim, and with the moon somewhere behind the clouds. A heavy wind blew from the west, rattling the windows and making the dry snow hiss against the glass, as it does in a south storm.

Yesterday I drove to the village to mail a letter to you. Polly was cramped up (you know how horses stand in severe weather, with the flank dropped, the legs drawn in), and was dancing as if on hot plates. There was a cutting wind, and much drifting snow in the air; I guessed that the temperature was as low as zero, but on reaching home I was surprised to find it 10° below.

Now it is half after three. I have just come up from the barn, where I have been to see the beasties. They seem reasonably comfortable; the horses are double-blanketed. The bow-wows go on three legs and nearly

shake themselves to little bits when out of doors, and the touch of the brass door-knob on the bare fingers stings like fire. The temperature rose five degrees about one, but the wind has since changed to the north, and now I see there is a drop again to 16° below. I expect this will be a record-breaking night at Four Winds. For my own part, I am amused by watching to see how low the temperature will fall; I do not suffer from the cold.

February 12.

I saw Mr. W., and asked him about the breeding of Nancy's dam's sire's dam Hibernia. He wrote it out in the form of a signed statement, and I called at his office this morning to get it. He read it to me in an oratorical manner, waving his right hand and looking up at me at each period, his voice deep and rolling. He sat tilted back in his chair, his feet on the stove, and his hat cocked over one eye.

TO HIS SISTER

Stowe, February 18, 1895.

You ask if I am not to send another picture to the Exhibition. I really don't know. Perhaps you heard that I began one of the Mountain, that I was compelled to relinquish, and my hope was then to finish a smaller winter sunset picture, which I began in November.

The reason why I gave up the former is that the subject is too great to be treated otherwise than with the best of whatever powers one may possess. This winter

I have been conscious of the beauty of the country rather as pain than as pleasure. It has oppressed without inspiring me; all this winter's painting I have done under a compelling sense of duty, and not because I have found interest or amusement in it. I have felt the difficulties much more than heretofore, and they are great. In the first place, the weather is so variable that the same effect (or what is approximately the same, sufficiently so for a painter's purpose) occurs perhaps at intervals of four or five days; then the excessive cold compels one to paint in a cumbersome fur coat, and causes such difficulties as the clouding of the glass, the stiffening of the fingers, and limits *my* endeavors to the little space of some two hours, for besides the energy expended in the work there is the additional demand for resistance of the cold. You can well imagine that work so interrupted and of such short duration must be taken up in no placid spirit. Whenever the opportunity occurs to continue my painting, I find I begin work in a flurry, made nervous by the feeling that something must be accomplished before the effect changes or my energy fails, and hardly have I worked myself into a state of calmness when either the one cause or the other puts an end to the proceedings. My eyes, also, have suffered from the snow glare—in painting the Mountain picture particularly, for in that case I faced the sun, though not directly.

TO MRS. JOHN W. ELLIOT

STOWE, March 4, 1895.

You have no doubt thought it odd that I did not return the "Lord Ormont" you sent me, but the truth is, I ventured to keep it because I was anxious not to lose the opportunity of reading the book, and yet could not find sufficient strength of mind to begin the struggle with the forced and baffling style of its telling. But there is the same lively feeling for beauty in this one as in all.

I must tell you of a little trip my mother and I took, while at Waterbury, for the purpose of seeing a horse of the old and now rare (in unmixed descent) Morgan stock.

We drove through the towns of Waitsfield and Moretown, which lie southeast of Camel's Hump. The latter is a wildish region, well timbered, and the road was interesting and but little travelled. There were no distant views, for the valleys were deep and narrow, but the peak of the Hump from time to time overlooked the dark spruce-clad ridges. At a well-to-do farm near Waitsfield we found what we went to see. The horse shows his affinity in blood to the old Black Hawk, in his spirited bearing as well as in the jet black and glossy coat. His head was wide at the eyes and exceedingly long from the setting of the ear to the eye, which was of a clear hazel; the nose fine and tapering; the lips thin. His legs were clean, hard, and sinewy, the hoofs round and high; the flank exceedingly deep, and the loins broad and muscular, as in all Morgans; the body round, the back short,

the neck heavy, with a swelling crest against which the diminutive ear was almost hidden. He was a horse of the old times, such as one sees in Flemish battle pieces of the seventeenth century; of great solidity, yet with an Arabian fineness of finish.

A deficiency of bone in the shoulders was perhaps his only failing. He was small, barely fifteen hands, but with a carriage and action I have seldom seen equalled. It shows the saddest degeneracy in New England's tastes and morals that such a stock as this horse represents is now superseded by the poor creature, loose-coupled, leggy, wooden-headed, the Hambletonian trotting horse. Truly we live among an unblessed generation; when the lumber dealers and horse breeders have accomplished their ends, it will be time for a second deluge.

This winter has been very severe; bare ground has not been seen here for four months; we have almost given up hope of any other season. One looks anxiously now for shore larks, tree sparrows, perchance bluebirds; so far none have made an appearance.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, March 17, 1895.

Thanks for the catalogue. I agree with you about Kenyon Cox's design; yet, like all of his, it has so much that is good and truthful that one laments all the more that additional feeling (of poetry, sense of beauty, what?), the charm which is always lacking. His is a

Spartan attitude—he will not concede a stroke, a line, to the pettiness of the "pretty": rather he seems happy to insist on what is unlovely, than to relax his severity.

Do you care for "Lord Ormont"? Frankly, I do not like it particularly. I do not believe in George Meredith; he seems to be in a false position as a novelist—he is so little of a story-teller; and I think this is why this sophisticated age has come so to dote upon him. It seems as if he did not feel well enough convinced of the reality of his story to dare to put it in simple phrase; his style seems a device to create atmosphere, not only to assist the reader's but to help his own powers of realization.

Mrs. Elliot said that in this book he exhibited a better grasp of the story, a more convincing lead to the culminating situation (at least I understood her so), but I do not find it so; it seems to me just as little inevitable as others of his works. It is like the studio work of a painter: it does not convince on the face of it, but requires some adaptation of the mood in order to believe in it, and then one is rewarded with much that is true and a great deal that is beautiful. The two heroes are shadowy but pleasing; I have no distinct impression of either Lord Ormont or Matey. I dare say mine is not the kind of mind to do justice to the work; perhaps you will think so too when I say that for me "the man Morsfield" is the real hero, and that episode the best part of the story.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, April 4, 1895.

I have had such a delightful letter from Thayer concerning my picture. I'll enclose it to you because I know both you and H. would like to see it. *Pray show it to no one else. You know how kind* Thayer is, how apt to do *more than justice* to every one but himself.

In about a week I shall send down my picture (not pictures, which you write of). There is but one, and that a poor thing. It is indeed a complete failure. It fails to convey the effect and sentiment it is supposed to catch, as also it fails in the way it is painted. I would not send it, only that Thayer's letter and the favorable things said about the picture now exhibited give me a kind of Dutch courage.

I seem to have painted this one with stiff fingers, frozen paint, and heart and mind considerably below zero. Indeed, such is partly true.

It is very unskilful, not truly felt, and also not finished; but of finishing it I despair, because it is our expectation to spend next winter in the South—otherwise I should be glad to let the thing go over another year.

TO HIS SISTER

WORCESTER, April 22, 1895.

I am pleased that you have asked Brush. I want his criticism, and also I want to hear how you are impressed

by him. I do not know him, but think he must be excellently simple, Spartan, etc.

There is here a picture of Joe's which he painted long ago at Scarboro. I never knew before how truthful it was, though I have always taken pleasure in its color. But acquaintance with a mountainous country has taught me a little concerning those transitions from purple to blue which terminate at last in so pure a color that it would be hard to exaggerate in what one's palette offers. The foreground is pale, as if the sunshine bleached out color, but the distance of a jewel-like brightness. It is just as I see nature. It has a charming warm afternoon atmosphere. It is indeed too soft, too warm, for rigid New England, and I should think it very characteristic of the place in which it was painted.

TO HIS MOTHER

WORCESTER, April 25, 1895.

You can well understand how one misses birds, particularly at this time of year, for the English sparrow is not a bird, rather the case of the transmigrated soul of a street urchin. Instead of the song sparrow's, the white-throat's, or the robin's song, to hear of mornings that dry harsh sound!—bird note it is not.

TO HIS SISTER

WORCESTER, May 1, 1895.

The 30th of last month was Carlotta's birthday, but, Miss C. being away, the festivities were postponed until to-day. They consisted of a little cake with four candles (white and red), lady's-fingers, and a dish of ice-cream of the same variety in color.

I lunched with Dr. and Mrs. G. H. was to have been there also, but he arrived very late, having been detained by a lecture; but when we came away, we took Margaret with us, as it seems the children were anxious to have her of the party. At the last moment her mother thrust into her hand a small box containing two feathers fit to decorate a doll's bonnet, and gave her to understand that they were a present for Carlotta. This extraordinary little lady then marched off with these two, to her, almost strange men, taking H.'s hand with one of her own and in the other clutching fast her box. This box seemed to weigh upon her mind, for she refused to allow me to carry it for her, and at the very moment of crossing the threshold and meeting with Carlotta, who came to open the door for us, she, in impressive silence, thrust it forward into Carlotta's hands. The latter received it without much understanding the nature of the presentation, whereat Margaret repossessed herself of it, and still silently, with her eyes fixed solemnly on Carlotta's, removed the cover, disclosed the contents, and, shutting the box, again placed it in Carlotta's hands.

All queries addressed to her she answered with nods,

and made but one remark during the feast—something she said in a loud and cheerful tone, but nobody understood it. It was in a language quite of her own, and each child in succession gave up the effort to interpret it.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, May 13, 1895.

The weather has very suddenly turned from an unusual heat, which advanced foliage in two weeks to the degree that's usually seen here about the middle of June (for the apple blossoms had already begun to show themselves and the ashes were out), to a nipping and an eager air. Frost is again on the mountains, and if the present heavy cloud should break and disperse, to-night will be one of significance to birds (if they had the wit? rather the folly, to make much of such matters), for a frost on the lowlands will certainly destroy the wild cherry crop.

Here we have not heard a note of the thrushes as yet. If I went down to the swamp after sunset, I might hear the winter wren; that would be the best song now, none better at any time, except, of course, the immortals and devils—hermits and veeries.

TO JOE EVANS

STOWE, August 19, 1895.

I have heard from Thayer about his portrait of Miss B. I guess that between them—the lady with so much

of delicate charm and the painter with such rare powers for just such expression—it must be a lovely thing.

He sent me a photograph of his "Virgin Enthroned," which is impressive, and to me, who know so well the subtleties of his work, suggests something very beautiful.

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, September 2, 1895.

I wrote you on the 31st, having then received the photographs, etc., of Rodin's work, but I kept the letter, since on perusal of it I found its tone very unsympathetic, and I did not wish to express myself rashly, particularly in a matter where it seems you feel so strongly. I know what you worship in art—force; so I am not surprised at your admiration.

I am sorry I cannot sympathize with you, but I am not touched; all I feel is the man's power. Even you must admit the incompleteness of the work, its great lacking—absence of charm. And also it seems to me that in the subjects that offer most poetically he succeeds less well.

The "Saint John" I cannot admire; there seems no feeling for beauty, none even for dignity. The "Calais Burghers," though impressive, is a trifle grotesque—a parlous fault; and as for the "Ninety-three," which you so admire, I think, considering the nature of the subject, it is inadequate. There is incompleteness in the artistic make-up, and a want, too, of the best qualities in one

who, treating the subject, suggests the terror and passion without the heroic fire.

The portrait busts are, of course, full of power and of character.

The door, I suppose, is the work on which to form a judgment, but of that I get too slight an impression to venture any opinion. Indeed, unless one is at once in sympathy with the work, how little impression these few sketches, etc., give!

TO HIS SISTER

STOWE, October 6, 1895.

Never did the country look more charming. It is now literally of the loveliest rose-color, for we have none of the too clear weather of autumn, nor yet of the thick and hazy kind so characteristic of the time of year. The atmosphere is more that of spring, with a slight moisture in the air, which gives softness to the landscape.

I have just finished "The Romance of Dollard"—the best book (novel), in my opinion, from any American pen since Hawthorne.

TO MRS. JOHN W. ELLIOT

BAINBRIDGE, GEORGIA, December 20, 1895.

You must know that I have been long intending to answer your letters, and now for the first time I find myself with energy sufficient to take pleasure in doing so.

First let me go back to the photographs of the Arab; my interest in them was great. At first, I confess, I was disappointed to find less beauty than I had looked for, but the extraordinary general excellence of the points began to show itself as I examined more of the photographs. The only possible criticism a horseman might make would perhaps be to wish for a greater length between hip and hock; to me the hock seemed placed a little high for perfection, but I am really no judge. The nose and lips seemed finer than anything I have ever seen in horse-flesh, but I think there are many Morgan stallions with larger brain-room, wider spaced between the eyes. The expression interested me in differing from that of fine horses of our domestic breeds; though equally intelligent, it seemed rather wild than gentle.

This is a singular country where we are now. It is really the first time we have been quite separated from Northern civilization; we have here unadulterated Southern life. To say that it is comfortable, enjoyable, pretty, or admirable, except in respect to the air and sunshine, would be to exaggerate grossly. It is, in fact, rude, grim, and uncomfortable; there seems to be no shrinking from—in fact, no consciousness of ugliness. The town might be pretty, with its superb oaks and beautiful evergreens of many kinds, but neglect and squalor everywhere make the place far from pleasing. There are many picturesque sights, but they are of a sombre order—the wild-looking black men that come in from the woods, ragged figures with curious long-bladed axes used for boxing the turpentine trees; the manacled prisoners that pass to and from the jail and court house

under a guard, who carry their rifles in not very soldierly manner, but one that suggests convenience for a quick shot.

I do not think I have seen more than one leading citizen as yet. On the whole, the men are stout, brutal-looking, but not much differing from the types one sees in manufacturing towns in New England. The country North certainly breeds something better—still I am not disposed to insist very strongly on this, either; New Englanders have not all the virtues.

I am delighted to hear that Brush is to make a drawing of your little boy. Though I know nothing of his work (alas!) within the last five or six years, yet I have always greatly admired it.

It is really hard to believe that it is close upon Christmas, while the weather remains as warm as the Vermont June. We are reminded of the fact, however, in a rather singular way, by the explosion every evening of torpedoes, fire-crackers, etc., which the negroes call "hurrying up Christmas."

TO HIS SISTER

BAINBRIDGE, December 27, 1895.

I have just finished Hardy's book, miscalled "novel." Some time ago I ventured the bold statement, when H. and I were discussing the author in question, that I thought "Tess" just escaped being a decided failure as a work of art, and that in any view it was artistically feeble. It was the intensity of feeling, and the poetry

of Tess's personality, and (what H. rightly calls Hardy's great power, his best) the suggestion of the poetry in the old pagan peasant life of England, that were the saving elements in the book. On the other hand, the dry, loveless, inartistic treatment of the villain and of almost all the other characters, including Angel himself, is surely a damning quality. No man who, undertaking to write a novel, concentrates all his feeling on a single character can hope for an artistic whole; but to treat other characters as creatures repellent to his own feelings (as is evidently his attitude toward his villain Alec) is absurd. No record made with aversion or loathing is art. Artistic villainy is created otherwise. I'll venture to say that nothing in the way of the devil outdoes our friend "Pew." And yet, instead of being a dead indigestible weight like Alec D'Urberville, he is a joy forever, a kind of horrible delight. And why? Because he is moulded by the loving touch of the real artist. Perhaps Hardy is too emotional to be a perfect artist. Well, however that may be, he is not now the man who wrote "Far from the Madding Crowd"; he's turned himself into a realist, or a querist, or something that is not an artist.

This "Jude the Obscure" is a wonderful instance of what the evil times may bring forth. It is told in the deadest, most perfunctory manner; it has not one touch of his great power; indeed, so far from showing the poetry of the peasant life, it evidently aims at the reverse, and ugly and accidental incidents are insisted upon, as with the true realists. It is so persistently pushed in the directions of defeat and misery that, to my thinking, it is

not a truthful picture of human life. The characters are treated with a remarkable lack of feeling; he has not been able, apparently, to expend any emotional power upon one, even; he is simply, like Dogberry, bestowing his tediousness upon us. "What!" the public should cry, like the horrified Leonato, *"all* your tediousness upon *us!"* It is a dreadful thing for an artist to get to holding theories; the title-page of "Tess" was the first sign of it, in the acute form, in Hardy's case—now he seems past cure. The next thing, you will find, he'll be writing plays like Ibsen's—and I'm disposed to think they will not be so good!

I think in the preface he says something to the effect that he has endeavored to bring home to the reader's appreciation the tragedy of misunderstood endeavors and defeated aims. So far as the shock to the sensibilities of the reader is concerned, he (Hardy) may rest him merry. It wants *art* to raise a story to the height of tragedy. But as, after all, his wish was probably "to make your flesh creep," it would be no consolation to him that nervous tissue had been spared. However, his reward will be great in the sale of his book and the applause of the Philistines.

You see I am rather vexed; but so must all be who once loved Hardy.

TO JOE EVANS

BAINBRIDGE, February 29, 1896.

This is now our second day at our log cabin in the pine woods, a much more desirable place than a boarding-house in a Southern town.

It is surprising that these odd structures do not present a more interesting appearance. This is built of the barked logs, its chimney half of brick, half of clay and sticks, its veranda of an interesting depth, and yet, somehow, it looks odd, without being in the least picturesque. I think the trouble must be the lack of color; 'tis all a uniform dirty gray.

Though the weather is pleasantly warm and we sit with doors and windows open until bedtime, yet there are no signs of spring. True, there is under one window a peach tree in blossom, and near at hand it is a delightful intimation, but as an element in the landscape, among the dead old oaks and the long shafts of the pines, it counts for very little. You know perhaps how it is in these Southern woods: you hear that the jasmine is blooming in February, and your mind's eye sees the picture of bursting spring. It is a fact that the jasmine blooms in February or even earlier, but it takes nothing from the wintry aspect of the leafless swamps; one might readily take the yellow of the flower for frost-bitten leaves.

The beauty as well as the wealth of the country is the long-leaved yellow pine. The pine is a tree of all regions, is it not? But I think this pine shows an affinity with

tropical forms in the manner of its growth—the flat spreading tops, so unlike the conical forms of Northern evergreens. It is beautiful in color, a bright green with shadows of purple-blue, more pure in color than I have ever noticed to be the case with any of the evergreens. At a distance in this thick air the foliage becomes a dusky purple. The edge of a pine wood where there are innumerable patches of purple shadow and the (lilac) trunks as close as organ pipes, and where there is certain to be one or two long bone-white shafts with a crown of skeleton boughs rigid as old roots—such a place offers a very tempting subject. I wish I had had better health this winter and could have attempted it.

The winter skies, too, have been charming—like our spring skies, pale blue with light streaky clouds, and toward the horizon turning pinkish or purple.

TO HIS SISTER

BAINBRIDGE, March 1, 1896.

You remember the learned man thought Poetry lived in the hot country, and the Shadow made certain vague claims to having there been in the anteroom of Poetry's abode. In my opinion, the learned man was quite mistaken, and, the Shadow having turned out such a thorough-going scamp, I think it is not too much to suppose him a liar in the bargain. Poetry is too fine, too subtle a spirit ever to have left the North.

To my sick eye this country seems a great waste place, crude, squalid, already half ruined—no forest

where the tree trunks are not blackened by fire, scarce a pine that has not the filthy witness of human rapacity, the blackened scar of an old boxing. The young oaks that flourish on the barrens are twisted, misshapen, with rough bark and bristling adventitious branches; they are to other young trees as street urchins to innocent children. Linnæus said of the American plants: "They have an aspect at once smooth and joyous"; and to my mind's eye the sentence brings the groves of young sugar maples with smooth straight stems and the crown of cool and broad-leaved foliage.

To say truly, this is a somewhat ungrateful mood, for in spite of myself I have from time to time been struck by the beauty of color in these Georgia pines, and by the charm of the winter skies. The sandy soil, too, allows a lovely blueness in shadows. It is generally a mistake to condemn—to condemn Nature, always so; it is simply a way of giving expression to one's limitations. But I do not think it is Nature I find fault with; it is rather with man—the deplorable mess he has made of this country.

You may suppose I have not seen many birds, only two that are properly natives: the Carolina chickadee, just as saucy as ours but not so pretty, lacking the buff tinge on the breast and sides—a slimmer bird—and the Carolina wren, which haunts around these buildings though said to be a shy species. We hear its notes (as described by Chapman) frequently in the wood. The cardinal, jay, thrasher, bluebird, flicker, crow, phœbe, and a flock of wagtails (new to me) comprise the whole; strangely enough, I have not seen either robin or mock-

ingbird, and I have never been near enough to sparrows or warblers to identify them. Yet even if I had been able to make some observations, I doubt if I should have been animated to do so. What are the winter birds of the South? The shadow, in a sense, but more properly the substance: it is in coming North that the soul is developed.

The spring comes grudgingly here. The weather is rather warmer than our June, more like July, and yet one must look well for the signs of spring—the general aspect is still more that of winter. At night, however, the frogs are heard, not the crackling note of our wood frogs, but a plaintive piping, a weak and rather tremulous call.

Our man brought in some wood violets the other day—a large, rather coarse purple variety—some wild pinks, and twigs from two little heath-like shrubs; one is the huckleberry of this region, the other (with waxy white flowers) he calls "sparkleberry." The dangleberry resembles it more nearly than anything I find in my Gray.

I am afraid I have not anything very encouraging to say regarding literary attempts. My own efforts only cause me to realize how long and how difficult an art it is—how it seems to make more cruel demands than others, at least than painting. It seems so easy; the expression in words is so natural; it seems to demand so little preliminary study, nothing of the training that painting and music require; but in the end the sentence that comes near to satisfy is as hardly wrought out as any part of the surface of the painted canvas—more hardly, perhaps, as the effort of concentration is the greater, as there is

no interesting mechanical process to hold the attention, no palpable subject, as in painting—in literature all's in the mind's eye.

I suppose this false impression arises from the fact that so many of no great genius take readily to pen and ink; the fact is, of course, that nothing of the same degree of badness in form and execution that most current literature exhibits would be tolerated in any other art. In a word, literature is an art, exacting, inexorable—a dangerous thing to play with, like fire. Sometimes it seems that if you can see no prospect of giving it the best of your energies, the most of your time, you had better abandon hope. But, really, I do not think this view the right one to take. The greatest work of art is, in a sense, a failure—no one save the artist can know in what degree; the poorest attempt, when inspired by real feeling—I mean when the subject is known and loved or deeply felt—can hardly be without some admirable quality, though the work may be too crude in form or obscure in expression to be "worth a *Christian's* eye." But it is the feeling of exaltation, of spiritual uplifting, which accompanies such labors that is of the first value; the moment when one seems to renew the lost sympathy with Nature—that is happiness; the freedom, the relief from the miserable constraints of the world, surely a great boon.

How far such occupations should be allowed to conflict with pressing duties is a question for the individual conscience, if it is really a question at all. In my opinion, it skills nothing to puzzle over the matter: people will express their natures whether or no, and the will can do

no more than modify or intensify action; like the lever of the steam engine, it governs the speed, but the lines are laid beforehand in some unalterable direction.

TO HIS SISTER

BAINBRIDGE, March 9, 1896.

You need not read this letter unless you find that it does not bore you. 'Tis about the books you have sent me; and I write it partly because I have nothing else to do, and partly because I am cross with most modern inventions and it is a kind of satisfaction to say so at some length.

Henry James's story,* although, in my opinion, not very successful, is a good story, but too slight for its bulk. That is the fault of his style and the danger of being so glib; he tells his story in too many words. He may have reflected that something more sprightly than his usual manner was required—at least I so conjectured; it seemed to me very trippingly told—at a quick-step, which, somehow, did *not* contrive to shorten the distance. Why not finish at the climax? Why spoil the effect with still more words? It is told, however, with great authority; it is a pleasure to read a man so sure of his language.

This "Red Badge of Courage"—have you read it? Is it the modern form of story? Is it really what we are coming to? For my part, I cannot take it seriously; do

* "Glasses," in the "Atlantic."

you happen to know how it is regarded by others? Who is Mr. Stephen Crane—is he a warrior in his own person, or is it all the power of imagination? To have fought in the war he describes, he must be at least fifty years old; and fifty years has quite another form of expressing itself.

There is something fresh in Owen Wister's book; it's the old story of Western adventure, but told with much more truth and less sentimentality than ever before, so it seems to me. The stories vary very much; "Salvation Gap," for instance, is the tiresome, sentimental, never very true kind of tale that Bret Harte told—only it has not his power—but on the whole the stories are good, and it is a pity the book is defaced by Remington's ugly ill-drawn illustrations.

Howells' "My Boy"* is, on reflection, very much what you might expect—a boy of much sensibility but surprisingly deficient in imagination, with a very small leaven of poetry in his nature.

The picture Howells draws is on the whole a truthful one, I think, though it strikes me he is not at all times sympathetically in touch with his subject; and, of course, it is truth in glimpses, as he always presents it, as if he never had the whole scene in view at once, but was looking through the slats of the fence. But it shows in some degree how our enlightened American people come to be what they are: brought up in an atmosphere purely industrial, in a country without traditions, monuments, or indeed history, it is not surprising that when they have developed fully, their accomplished ambition is the steam

* In "A Boy's Town."

heater, the hot and cold water supply, and electric illumination—perhaps, in addition, the Nineteenth Century Club, or, in another variation, a span of 2:20 trotters.

Howells perpetually harps on boys' failures, and seems not to feel that the successes are made in the imagination, and so outrun the little skill and limited means a boy has control of. Thus the desire is satiated long before a tenth part of the task they set themselves is accomplished. One almost fancies he has forgotten his youth, though attempting to describe it, when he speaks of the circus.

Do you notice the crumbs of socialistic doctrine so artfully strewn along the way? It is just as well that youth swallows that kind of food without tasting.

He is not much in awe of childhood; children's failures, children's fears, form the comical element of the work, repeated from chapter to chapter until it becomes a little oppressive.

Last night we had a crashing thunder-storm and one of those flooding rains for which the region is noted. To-day two ladies in a buggy stopped to inquire if the "creek was swimming." We could give no information, and one, addressing the other, said, "Well, suppose we try it?" But the other objected, "We'd better pay some one to wade ahead." Comical, was it not?—their idea seemingly being that if the mercenary should drown they would decide not to cross the creek. They went on to confer with Major B. on the chances.

You would like Major B. I have not talked with him much, but I should like to do so; I guess from his five years' experience here that he must have obtained much

interesting knowledge of the people and country. He tells me of Southern gentlemen, his neighbors, calling upon him in the morning and making protest at the suggestion of having their horses put up; but yielding, they linger on until dinner time. With some reluctance they accept the invitation to dine. In the midst of the afternoon, as it seems, supper time surprises them; they consent to remain to that meal, and finally, well after dark, they mount and ride on their way.

You should see M. and me out on our occasional drives; if I thought I could convey all the oddity of the spectacle, I'd attempt a little sketch. But picture to yourself a turnout so worn that the running gear has lost all trace of its coat of paint, and in its harness has a heavy archaic character, as if of native construction; it is the normal condition of the Georgian vehicle, however, though the hubs slide and jar on the spindles and the wheels turn with waverings. Our horse is an old blind stallion, wall-eyed, knee-sprung, who trudges at a walk (our chosen pace) on unshod hoofs that have never known cleaner or paring knife; the harness is russet with age and patched with pieces of twine.

We have had the pleasure of releasing no less than sixteen bob-whites, which were brought living to us, having been caught in snares. We ransomed them and then set them at liberty. The last that came, some five, were free in a box—very timorous, crowding together in corners and uttering a low piping or twittering; since their release we have heard them all day, calling to one another with a broken plaintive note. The other party of eleven were secured by having their legs tied tightly together

with strips of calico; they sat in the bottom of a basket and only moved their heads, watching us with their bright dark eyes. They seemed to be "studdyin'." They struggled very little when M. lifted them out and with scissors severed their bonds, and they went off with less show of excitement than the last.

I have seen the brown-headed nuthatch and the tufted titmouse, both not of our acquaintance in the North. There are many birds now, but my eyes are too weak to look against the sky for them, and they flit among the budding tops of oaks, avoiding the dead-wood of the lower level. We hear the cardinal now very often; and after the often repeated "che-ow, che-ow," follow the most charmingly modulated call notes, very sweet and coaxing.

How we rejoiced over your letter describing Robert's happy reception! I am struck with surprise every now and then when I realize that I have never seen him as Romeo—I see him so clearly in the mind's eye. It answers nothing to lament our exile; but a word on this subject would lead to too many words.

TO JOE EVANS

BAINBRIDGE, April 1, 1896.

I am sorry my picture lost the prize (as usual). It would seem as if one might hardly be so daring as to make the attempt again. There is a great finality about the number three—see Father William: "I've answered three questions, and *that* is *enough.*" And the Bell Man: "What I say three times is *true.*"

You know, no one was ever permitted more than three wishes, and three attempts have ever been the limit. I do not see my way to apply for the prize again. However, I am glad the picture is well hung.

TO HIS BROTHER HENRY

WASHINGTON, CONN., July 13, 1896.

What a summer of beauty this must be at the fairest of all places! The lindens are in flower now, or should be, but perhaps this rich warm rainy season has pushed the development of all vegetation somewhat ahead of time.

I am sure you have not had a sultry day, however all the rest of the world may suffer from heat and humidity.

Oh for Stowe! Oh for the North! Send me word of it—every detail!

TO HIS SISTER

WASHINGTON, CONN., September, 1896.

What a gift life was, not a right!

VERSES

VERSES

WINTER'S ANSWER TO MISGIVINGS

Often the heart that eager is
To build its hope on dazzling height
Falls in the shadow of its bliss,
And, comfortless, sees endless night.
A sullen whisper stirs anon:
"Acknowledge life a worthless boon;
What gain to cloak and smother care—
To smile at grief? Accept your doom.
Why struggle still against despair?
How long resist the creeping gloom?"

As long as crowns that hilltop bare
The pine against the azure sky,
And gives its music to the air,
And waves its tasselled boughs on high;
As long as shall the chickadee
Flit, lisping sweet, from tree to tree;
As long as on this slope's displayed
The sumach's dauntless red cockade.

TO ———

"See!" cried that voice of love
That never claimed my ear with aught but kind intent,
"See, in the west, those tiny clouds above
The crescent moon, where rose and azure blent
Hang on the setting sun!" Alas that I,
Vexed with the ills of life, whose sombre side
O'erdarkened petty pleasures, stubbornly
Bent on defiance, in a sullen pride
Answered: "I cannot now attend." The voice was still.
Then, at her humble silence, spoke my heart.
I rose, and slowly, with an altered will,
Moved to the window—but the sky was cold:
That ardent glow was shrunk and paled away,
Those floating clouds were comfortless of light,
Stretching across the sky a veil of gray,
Cold on the coming of the autumn night.

TO ———

I think you are pure-minded,
And gentle and pitiful,
And wise and vain and foolish,
Full of little fears and great hopes,
As good women are.

TO THE LUNA MOTH

Pale wanderer of the summer night!
My candle's feeble ray of light,
Sped out upon the empty dark
(To thee a lost Promethean spark),
Hath touched the circle of thy flight;
And wondrous, shining pale and far,
A beacon flame to lure thee hence,
It dawns upon thy innocence—
The glory of a fallen star.

Poor moth! On thee the waking Spring
Shall never lift her laughing eyes:
So swift, so soon, a chill surprise,
Comes Death to close thy azure wing.
Yet do I pity overmuch
Thy sudden end, who day by day
Must see the Summer waste away
And feel the Winter's iron clutch?
Too strange is life, too swiftly spent,
Too swift for joy, too strange for sorrow;
I have no leisure to lament
Thee, dead to-day, who die to-morrow.
The sigh I breathe were wasted breath
That mourns thy fate and weeps not ours,
For in the final grasp of Death
My years shall be as thy short hours.

So might it seem less loss than gain
To touch the limit of delight
And know the utmost bounds of pain
And vanish in a summer night.

Outside, the winds are stealing by,
Faint with the breath of drowsing flowers,
From meadows open to the sky,
From moonlit slopes and sylvan towers,
From woody dells remote and deep,
Where, in the silence and the gloom,
Spring violets; or laden come
From beds where purple pansies sleep—
Short, sweet, and happy night of June!
A wandering gleam, the river threads
A way among the fields, and spreads
Its silver shallows in the moon;
And imaged in the glassy pond
Are bank and bush and grove beyond;
And in the depths profounder dwells
A sunken planet, bright and large.
The frogs, like drowsy sentinels,
Among the rushes on the marge
A hoarse and sullen watchword pass.
The dew lies sparkling in the grass.
Night-loving things are all astir:
The wings of owls and bats are spread,
And from her net of gossamer
The nimble spider weaves her thread,
And thou, with downy wings unfurled,
Dost roam, Queen of the waking world!

Out of the mystery of night
Thou com'st to me with wavering flight,
Unerring in thy shining quest,
Bold-hearted as a looked-for guest . . .
Strange silent thing! Thy fragile wings
Bear greetings from another land:
There dwells within thy dreaming eyes
The memory of Paradise.
The light of early morning brings,
Aloft on gaily painted wings,
Thy prototype of sunny air,
Frail emblem of the soul, as bright
As rainbow hues, as changing fair . . .
But on the dusky edge of night
Thou hoverest, like a guilty sprite,
Unseen until the day is done.
Perchance thou art the soul of one
Too new to heaven to forget
The living bonds of earth. I think
Thou art a spirit; one that met
No friend upon the further brink,
And earthward, on the night wind's breath,
Art borne along the gleaming skies,
Sad exile in the gates of Death!
That crossed the threshold full of pain,
With outstretched arms and longing eyes
And heart that yearned to earth again;
Whose pleading lips are shut and dumb,
Whose lease of life is sadly sped:
In such pale semblance might they come,
The souls of all the lonely dead.

TO THE WOOD THRUSH

Often along a mossy road
That keeps the secret of my tread,
I walked at evening; gently flowed
The summer air, and overhead

The golden tide of evening ebbed,
And, white upon the soft expanse,
The limpid ether, silver-webbed,
I saw the moon's pale countenance.

Then sometimes on the silence stirred
The cricket's slight and shrilly cry;
The sounds of evening, vaguely heard,
Are blent and faint along the sky;

While with a saddened cadence fall
From fields afar and twilight dells,
The low of cows, the driver's call,
The lessened beat of distant bells.

Where silence broods, where shade abounds,
I oft in expectation stood,
And heard the first melodious sounds
Wake in the arches of the wood;

And from the depth and gathered night
Of maple boughs and hooded beech
I marked with still and strange delight
The woodland genius finding speech.

No torrent of impassioned song,
But, like some lone and hidden rill,
The sylvan music glides along
And chimes aloud, and then is still.

A magic holds the listening ear:
Breathless I wait, and know no choice,
Dumb as the rocks, intent to hear
Once more that airy elfin voice.

THE BLUE HERON

He raised the rifle, steely bright;
  He took good aim, the trigger drew;
And, reeling in its happy flight,
  Fluttered and fell the heron blue.

"He's hit; he's staggered; see him swing
  In a wide circle down the air!
See how he settles, light of wing,
  On the lake's bosom smooth and bare!"

Grouped on the forest's margin, by
  A placid lake that mirrored all,
With upturned gaze and anxious eye
  They watched the heron float and fall.

They saw the glittering sunlight shed
  On quivering leaves, and heard the speed
And music of the wind, and said:
  "Alas, this is an evil deed!"

Methinks a vengeance should pursue
  That rude soul to the brink of death
Whose cruel hand for pleasure slew,
  Who stopped a free and happy breath.

For him the wind should bear a sigh
  Where'er it stirs; the wood and shore
Seem empty as the empty sky,
  With sense of loss for evermore;

The sparkling light seem bleak and cold;
  The wavelets sob on sand and stone;
And ever should the silence hold
  An echo for his ear alone.

THE SONG SPARROW

The dawn rose slowly, pale and bleak;
  The morning air struck raw and chill;
And, pied in many a patch and streak,
  The snow still glimmered on the hill.

Gray clouds along the mountains crept;
  Frost-whitened all the garden lay;
And slow and silent tears bewept
  Softly the cheerless birth of day.

The earth lay wrapped in chill distress;
  The promised spring seemed all remote;
When suddenly the silentness
  Was broken by a bird's clear note.

Song of a daring heart serene!
  Into the dusk I peered in vain,
Though all the dumb and dreary scene
  Was thrilling with the valiant strain.

But to my mental view arose
  The modest singer, brown of coat,
Perched in that all-enraptured pose,
  The lifted bill, the quivering throat.

Symbol of Hope—the earliest borne
  On dauntless wings these snows among—
Sweet in the sullen face of dawn
  Arose the silvery flight of song!

THE WOOD THRUSH

(FRAGMENT)

Hark! From those frail and trembling throats
Hid in the leafy haunts above,
A low and liquid murmur floats
Out of the hushed and listening grove.

It faints; a peal of fairy bells
Rings on the silence deep and tense;
The sudden music lapses, swells,
Fails with a sweet inconsequence.

So die the twittering notes away,
And in the holy calm and hush
Falls sweet the latest voice of day,
The utterance of the hidden thrush.

FRAGMENT FROM "THE VOYAGEUR"

(The wind is supposed suddenly to begin blowing, bringing the sound of water from the lake.)

But hark! The ripple of the rising wind
Runs in the tree-tops, and the whisper stirs,
Through rustling birches and the soughing firs,
Deep in my heart a longing undefined;
And faintly clashing, o'er the hushing trees
Whose secret shudders through the listening night,
A distant music rings, so faint, so light,
It climbs and hovers on the flying breeze.
Where swims the lily, tiny wavelets comb,
And in the rushes flash a rim of foam;
The underlying shore and mirrored night
Are rent and shattered, and a broken light
Dances o'er shadowy deeps where dwelt the moon;
The shallows with a golden rain are strewn,
And echo fills the cove with blithe alarms
Like plaudits faintly struck from fairy palms.
The sleeping spirit of the Northern lakes,
The fair dread siren, shivers and awakes.

SPIRITS

From lily-beds and osiers damp
Breathes cool the odorous air of spring;
The little stars in heaven lamp
My blithe and lonely wandering.
Lone, still alone, in happy mood
I hover near, and far away,
In the sweet, short nights of May,
From the white lakes, from the wood,
Spirits gather: elf and fay
Fain would fly, but hover near,
Half in awe and half in fear.
Oh, the circle of their round,
Where, with neither sign nor sound,
The dancers mingle, touch and glance,
Circling on the haunted ground,
Clasp, dissever, skip and bound
Breathless in a shadow dance!
Spectral mute and filmy rout,
Shade and starlight in and out,
What are these that float so light,
Alien to the woodland sprite,
Free as air and free of night?
Lo! the merry ghosts are these,
Dancing, dumb diaphanies,
Spirits that are haply free
From all mortal misery.

Soon the morning star's pale shine,
Dawning on their measures fleet,
In the gloom of yonder pine
Mocks the gleam of ghostly feet.

WINTER SUNSET

Where the wind sighs, so softly, so wearily,
In the dark hemlock-tops stirring so drearily,
Where the red light
Darkens to night,
And there's intense
Cold and suspense,
There is the spirit that whispers one cheerily.

The western wind has lightly stirred
The bending grasses on the mead;
And in the longing leaves 'tis heard
To pass with rush of joyous speed.

The robins loud their songs repeat,
And from the denser dim retreat
The hermit's note comes faint and sweet—

The silver bell, the lisp and sigh;
And that wild spirit, strange and shy,
The mocking veery, makes reply.

It seems so short a time ago
This forest floor, where flowers blow,
Was deep in folds of silent snow.

Yet many forms of life are sped
That saw the spring sky overhead;
And many an eager hope is dead.

Where are the flowers of early spring?
For not to them the thrushes sing;
To them no breeze is whispering.

Spring-beauty touched with rosy hue,
Goldthread silver-tipped with dew,
Wind-flowers, and the violet blue,

To whom the earliest love is told,
Are graved amid the withered mould:
For them the early year is old.

THE SECOND BIRTH

Cold is the hand of Death,
Icy his breath,
Gentle his touch as the fall of the snow;
And as the cold snows keep
In an unbroken sleep
Life for a second birth, does not Death so?

THE NORTH COUNTRIE

First trembling star that meets the eye,
'Twas never yet so fair to see
As when it climbs the rose-pale sky—
The chill sky of the North Countrie.

No wind so constant, pure, and free
As that which flows so coldly forth,
Whose rest is on the snowy sea,
The frozen bosom of the North.

The dark spruce bends and breathes a sigh
Half yearning, half of weary plaint;
And shining wings go rustling by,
And sweet notes falter, wild and faint.

Oh, but to taste the icy wine!
To see the snow-wreaths driving white;
The jewel morning, dusk and shine,
The sapphire eve, the opal night!

Ah, starry fane, pale splendors traced
O'er gleaming fields and hoary heights!
The silence of the wintry waste,
The dances of the Northern Lights!

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